

**The Effectiveness of Nature-Awareness Exercises as a  
Therapeutic Intervention for Anxiety:  
A Hermeneutic Single-Case Efficacy Design Study**

**Beeleaf Institute of Contemporary Psychotherapy  
Advanced Diploma**

**Research Dissertation**

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## Abstract

Hermeneutic Single Case Efficacy Design (HSCED) is a systematic case study research methodology for evaluating the efficacy of therapy in a single case. It uses a cross examination of a variety of quantitative and qualitative data and creates arguments both for and against the case.

It attempts to find evidence that plausibly answers or disproves the questions: Did the client change? And did they change as a result of the therapy? An independent judge further evaluated the data and arguments.

Nature-awareness exercises and games have become very popular with many bushcraft and tracking schools in the UK as a fun way for trainee's to expand their awareness of nature, and develop their sensory skills. The nature-awareness exercises are presented as a series of nature-based games, sensory and awareness exercises, primitive skills, meditations, solo reflective time, and group sharing. They are intended to be fun, and to inspire a playful child-like sense of wonder towards nature. Whilst at the same time gently challenging the participants to explore beyond their existing pre-conceptions. Natural Awareness Therapy adds a therapeutic intent to the existing nature-awareness exercises and games.

The author is trained in Contemporary Psychotherapy, which is a solution-focused integrative psychotherapy.

Generalised anxiety is characterised by chronic feelings of excessive worry about a variety of topics. Individuals can often feel tense and on edge. The worrying feelings are often accompanied by physical symptoms such as racing heart, sweating, tension, shaking and elevated blood pressure.

The study aims to determine if nature-awareness exercises can be an effective therapeutic intervention for adults with an anxiety disorder.

A rich case record was collated from the various data sources. Affirmative and sceptic briefs and rebuttals were created and then adjudicated by an independent judge.

The judge felt that the client changed considerably, and that the nature-awareness exercises contributed substantially to the changes.

## Literature Review

A hundred years ago only 2 out of every 10 people in the world lived in a city. Now for the first time ever more of the world's population now lives in urban rather than rural areas (World Health Organisation, 2012). Western society has also become more and more industrialised and urbanised. As of the 1980s people in industrialised nations spend more than 90% of their lives indoors (National Research Council, 1981), our time spent outside is estimated at only 1% - 5%. (Chalquist, 2009) As a modern society we appear to have become increasingly disconnected from the natural world. Ulrich (Ulrich et al, 1991) cites (Cohen et al, 1986), when he writes that there is a rapid accumulation of evidence indicating that environmental stressors from urban living (e.g. overcrowding, community noise, air pollution) can elicit substantial stress and anxiety in large groups of people. Our bodies have evolved to work in close harmony with the natural world. This is most evident in the way our bodies synchronise with the natural light and dark cycles of the day, and the longer seasonal cycles (Roberts, 2010). Living and working in artificially lit offices and homes, and spending so little of our time outdoors in natural daylight interfere with our circadian rhythm which can result in changes to our sleep/wake cycle, blood pressure, metabolism and immune responses (Roberts, 2010).

With environmental issues now having a more prominent political focus, just about everyone in the western world is aware of environmental crises such as global warming (NCDC 2009). Professor Lovelock who conceived the idea of the Gaia hypothesis (Lovelock, 1972), believes it is already too late to save civilisation as we know it, as the climate may have moved beyond a point of no return. (Lovelock, 2007) People are being encouraged to recycle, reduce energy consumption, and live a greener lifestyle. For some people this pressure to live a 'greener' life coupled with concerns over the future health of the planet is causing what has been coined 'eco-anxiety' (Nobel, 2007).

Combining environmental stressors from urbanisation, and changes in lifestyle from industrialisation, plus the physical and psychological effects of spending less time outdoors, and concerns over the state of the environment, it is really no wonder that our mental health is suffering. (Evans & Cohen, 1987)

## History

For millennia we have existed in very close relationship with the natural world, we have been intrinsically connected to the rhythms of our natural environment for our water and food and to the changing of the seasons. The Biophilia Hypothesis (Wilson, 1984) puts forward the idea that humans have an innate need to be close to nature and living things. It suggests human identity and personal fulfilment depend on our relationship with nature. The human need for nature is not just linked to use of its resources but it also has an influence on our emotional state, thought processes and even spiritual development. (Chalquist, 2009) Wilson states that human evolution is so closely intertwined with our environment that our need for relationship with nature must reside in our very genes (Wilson, 1984). In their article, Williams and Nesse tell us that our genetic make-up has barely changed over the last 10000 years, an almost insignificant change of 0.005%. (Williams & Nesse 1991) Therefore it would seem that despite our technological advancements and societies sense that it can survive isolated from nature, we are still genetically hard wired to coexist in close relationship with the natural environment. Louv believes that conflicts can arise between our modern society's disconnection from the natural world and our innate need to relate to it. This can create a series of internal behavioural conflicts which may give rise to dissociative and addictive problems. (Louv, 2005)

Given our seemingly in-built requirement for interaction with the natural world for our physical and mental well-being, it would appear that there is a strong need to research ways of integrating nature back into our therapeutic practices and daily lives.

## General Nature Benefits

There is now much research to support the benefits of nature on our general well-being. Several recent large studies in Japan involving over 1000 subjects, with control groups in built-up environments doing the same activities, have shown that spending time simply walking or contemplating in a forest setting is associated with lower cortisol levels, lower blood pressure, reduced heart rate and increased heart rate variability. (Park et al, 2010)

Research originally conducted by Ulrich (Ulrich, 1979) in which he showed photographs of nature scenes to students who were about to take an examination, reported a subjective reduction in fear, and a more positive outlook, when compared to those students who were shown photographs of urban built scenes. Recent research has supported Ulrich's results (Chang, 2007). Participants were connected to Electroencephalograph (EEG) equipment to measure their brain

wave activity, electromyograph (EMG) to measure muscular tension, and BVP (Blood Volume Pulse) to measure sympathetic arousal through changes in blood flow and pulse. Whilst being shown images of natural scenes in nature, subjects showed higher alpha wave activity and decreased sympathetic arousal when compared to their non-viewing scores, indicating a greater state of relaxation.

In a study conducted by MIND (MIND, 2007), 20 members took two walks in contrasting environments to test the impact on self-esteem, mood and enjoyment. 44% of participants who walked through an indoor shopping centre experienced reduced self-esteem. While 90% of participants on a green walk reported increased self-esteem. 71% reported decreased levels of depression following the green walk. Whilst 22% reported an increase in depression after the walk through the shopping centre. 71% said they felt less tense after the green walk, while 50% said their tension had increase after the shopping centre walk.

In a study held at a residential care facility, elderly residents performed activities both in a classroom and in the garden. In the garden environment cortisol levels were significantly lower indicating reduced stress levels. (Rodiek, 2002)

There are a number of studies which show that exposure to natural environments can affect physical health and recovery from surgery. A view from a window of nature, rather than a built environment speeds recovery after surgery. In a study involving prisoners, those whose cells had a view of a natural environment used less of the health care services, had improved work performance and increase job satisfaction. (Hartig, Mang & Evans, 1991; Ulrich et al, 1991)

## **Ecotherapy: Combining Nature with Therapy**

When the positive effects of nature are combined with traditional psychotherapy and counselling methods carried out by qualified professionals, we get a nature-based therapy which leverages the benefits of both worlds. Clinebell originally coined the term 'ecotherapy' (Clinebell 1996). Chalquist describes ecotherapy as “an umbrella term for treatment modalities that include the natural world in relationships of mutual healing and growth” (Chalquist, 2009). Ecotherapy is a relatively new field of therapy but one which has many ancient roots, as such it draws its inspiration from both modern and ancient practices. Unlike us, our ancestors would have saw little or no separation between themselves and the natural world they lived in. Many native cultures today still live in a harmonious relationship with nature, interacting with natures



rhythms, to sustain and heal, physically, mentally and spiritually. In native cultures the shaman is in effect the equivalent of western societies doctor, psychotherapist and spiritual guide. The nature-based healing practices of many native cultures are currently being researched and integrated with modern therapeutic practices under the umbrella term of ecotherapy (Metzner 2009).

There are numerous ways that nature-based therapists are bringing the relationship with nature into the healing process. Such as Animal Assisted Therapy (King, 2007), Pet Assisted Therapy (Roth, 1999), and Equine Assisted Therapy, Horticultural Therapy (Linden, Grut, 2002), and Walking Talking Therapy (Scott, 2003).

Researchers working with depressed patients showed that CBT-based psychotherapy carried out in a forest environment produced superior results when compared to the same therapy in a hospital environment. (Kim, Chung & Woo, 2009)

In a controlled study, patients diagnosed with schizophrenia, anxiety, affective disorders, and personality disorders showed significant improvement in coping ability, self-efficiency, symptom reduction, and quality of life after spending 3 hours twice a week working with farm animals for 12 weeks (Berget, Braastad & Ekeberg, 2008).

## **Wilderness therapy**

Wilderness-therapy is an ecotherapy that has been around since the 1960's and uses the natural environment to challenge and help participants (Harper 1995). It evolved from Outward Bound, an adventure programme which was developed in the 1940's during WW2 by Dr. Hahn, who believed that presenting stressful challenges in an outdoor environment would allow seamen to learn about themselves, build confidence and help bond them as a group. Unlike more traditional indoor therapies, wilderness therapy often takes place over extended periods of time and can involve hiking, camping and other outdoor activities. This necessitates a different therapeutic relationship with the participants, as you share not just the therapy time with them but also the day to day living activities.

Russell defines wilderness therapy as the use of traditional therapy techniques, especially group therapy techniques, in a wilderness setting, when the wilderness is approached with therapeutic intent. Wilderness therapy utilises outdoor adventure pursuits and other activities, such as

primitive skills and reflection, to enhance personal and interpersonal growth. Base-camping and expedition-based models are employed (Russell, 2000).

Wilderness therapy often uses challenges. This may be the general perceived risk that comes from being isolated in the wilderness itself, or the challenges may come from activities. The perceived risk may be emotional, social or physical. Challenges need to provide just enough perceived risk so that participants will choose to do them, and not so much risk that they will avoid them. A sense of achievement is felt as participants accomplish what they previously thought was insurmountable. Having the effect of building confidence, trust, and self-esteem. (Chase, 2009)

The wilderness environment offers the opportunity for solitude and reflection, and is well suited to mindfulness and bite sized spans of keeping the mind in the present moment, keeping the attention off past concerns and future worries. Even if this is only transitory, it allows time for another mental vantage point to develop enabling the participant to see beyond their current situation. (Selhub, Logan, 2012)

A theory which is particularly relevant to wilderness therapies is Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan, 1995) which is based around the concept of directed attention. Directed attention is employed when something did not of itself attract our attention, but which is deemed important to attend to nonetheless. Typical examples might be work, demanding or uninteresting environments, or difficult interactions with people or places. This type of attention requires mental effort to maintain and results in fatigue. Kaplan states that natural environments are restorative for several reasons. 1) Being away from your usual environment, frees you from your usual mental activity. 2) Fascination. The environment or task is fascinating enough to hold attention without mental effort. 3) Extent or vastness of the natural environment. It must be rich enough and coherent enough to seem like a whole new world. 4) Compatibility, the setting must fit what you are trying to do, and would like to do. In particular, positive psychological benefits can be maximised when the natural environment provokes fascination and deeply engages the mind.

One concept that seems to have particular relevance to nature-based therapies is the 3 Way Relationship (Berger & McLeod, 2006). This concept seeks to extend the 2 way therapist-client therapeutic relationship by adding nature as a third partner or co-therapist. The therapist may then take a specific standpoint, either working directly with the client with nature in the

background, as a tool provider, or taking more of background role acting as a witness or mediator, whilst allowing the client to relate and work directly with nature. (Berger, 2006)

*“This way of working can expand the process into additional spiritual and transpersonal dimensions, allowing the client to connect to the ‘larger than self’, providing a fresh meaning, a sense of partnership and interdependence that he shares not only with people but also with nature”* (Berger, 2006, p4)

From a Self-Relations Psychotherapy perspective the three way relationship may allow the client to re-connect to something ‘larger than themselves’, the larger relational field, and experience a sense of belongingness. With nature acting as a nurturing, non-judgmental, positive external sponsor to the client’s neglected self (Gilligan, 1997). Schroeder whilst writing about his use of ‘focusing’ (Gendlin, 1978) in the natural environment describes his three insights that go some way to support this idea. His insights are “This is where I belong”, “Nothing needs to be done” and Nature is an egoless other” (Schroeder, 2008). In other words he experiences a sense of belongingness, with nature not needing anything from him, or having any expectations of him. It just is what it is, and he is able to rest, let go and just be.

### **Nature-awareness exercises**

Nature-awareness exercises have become very popular with many bushcraft and tracking schools as a way to develop trainee’s awareness and sensory skills. “Bushcraft is a long term extension of survival skills” (Wikipedia 2010). Whilst survival skills are about staying alive long enough to be rescued, bushcraft is about living in harmony with and thriving in the natural environment longer term. Heightened awareness is needed to be able to effectively track wild animals by being aware of the slightest disturbances they leave behind in the environment as they move through it. The ability to move quietly through the natural environment whilst blending in is also invaluable. Most people these days learn these skills as a way to observe nature. (Brown 1983) The nature-awareness games themselves come from a variety of sources. Many originate from the work of Joseph Cornell, a nature-awareness instructor who works primarily with children. (Cornell, 1998) Other exercises have their origins in the tracking and hunting techniques of several aboriginal cultures, particularly North American Indians. (Brown, 1983) They are presented as a series of nature-based games, sensory and awareness exercises, primitive living and primitive skills, meditations, solo reflective time, and group sharing.

## Natural Awareness Therapy

Natural Awareness Therapy adds a therapeutic intent to the existing nature-awareness games and exercises. Geoffrey McMullan an ex-soldier, experienced bushcraft and tracking instructor, and qualified counsellor, developed Natural Awareness Therapy from his experiences whilst using nature-awareness exercises with a group of addicts at a rehabilitation centre. Feedback sheets from those participants listed many psychological benefits that seemed to go way beyond an increased awareness of nature (McMullan, 2012). McMullan has since researched nature-awareness interventions for his Masters Degree in Addiction Counselling. He found that the interventions could be effective for adults suffering from addictions. (McMullan 2008)

In their study Russell, Hendee and Phillips-Miller define two types of wilderness therapy programmes “expedition and base-camp” (Russell, Hendee, & Phillips-Miller, 2000, p.210). Base-camp programmes make small expeditions out of the base-camp to perform therapeutic activities, before returning back to camp for follow up activities. Natural Awareness Therapy can therefore be considered a type of base-camp based wilderness therapy. (McMullan 2010)

Metaphor and symbolism are used throughout, as a way to connect participants new awareness of their reactions and any thoughts provoked by challenges within exercises, to their mental issues in day to day life. (McMullan 2008) Interestingly many of the games use processes which in Self-Relations Psychotherapy terms (Gilligan, 1997) quite effectively quieten the Cognitive Self and increase awareness of and sensitivity to the Somatic Self. This is often referred to in the nature-awareness exercises as 'tuning into your spirit' or your 'heart'.

## Current research

Nature-based research has come under criticism for its frequent lack of sophisticated analytic procedures and methods, with claims that it based mostly on qualitative data with an emphasis on anecdotal evidence (Ewert, 1987; Hine, Pretty & Barton, 2009). However despite this there is now a substantial and growing volume of research on the beneficial effects of nature, and nature-based therapies.

Research into nature-based therapies has in general mostly focused on children, troubled adolescents, criminals, addicts and those in remedial healthcare. (Hine, Pretty & Barton, 2009)

There is plenty of evidence to suggest that nature-based therapies could potentially be very

effective as a treatment for adults with anxiety disorders, due to reported effects such as reduced sympathetic nervous system arousal (Chang, 2007), and positive changes in self-esteem, self-confidence, self-determination, increased self-efficacy, self-image, greater sense of self control and self-empowerment (Hine, Pretty & Barton, 2009, p5). However there seems to have been little research carried out specifically into the effectiveness of nature-based therapies on adults with anxiety disorders.

There has also been very little research into the therapeutic benefits of Natural Awareness Therapy or the nature-awareness games upon which it is based. Currently the only research I am aware of is by McMullan (McMullan 2008), who researched the effectiveness of natural-awareness interventions for adults suffering from addictions. There has however been no research into the effectiveness of nature-awareness interventions for adults suffering from anxiety disorders.

# Research Dissertation

## Introduction

According to the Office of National Statistics 1 in 6 adults had experienced some form of 'neurotic health problem' during the previous week (Office for National Statistics, 1995). The most common neurotic disorders were anxiety and depressive disorders. More than 1 in 10 people are likely to have a 'disabling anxiety disorder' at some stage in their life (Ehlers, 1997).

Anxiety is one of the most common disorders treated by psychotherapists and counsellors. Yet there is currently very little research that has looked specifically at the efficacy of nature-based interventions when used with adult anxiety sufferers. Research has mostly focused on troubled adolescents, criminals, addicts, children and those in remedial healthcare. (Hine, Pretty & Barton, 2009)

To date there has been almost no research into the benefits of Natural Awareness Therapy, or the nature-awareness exercises on which it is based. The only research that I am aware of is by Geoffrey McMullan (McMullan, 2008). Who researched the effectiveness of nature-awareness when used as a therapeutic intervention for adults with addictions. There has however been no research into the effectiveness of nature-awareness as an intervention for adults suffering from anxiety disorders.

There is now a substantial and growing volume of research on the beneficial effects of nature, and nature-based therapies. However nature-based research has come under criticism for its frequent lack of sophisticated analytic procedures and methods, with claims that it is based mostly on qualitative data with an emphasis on anecdotal evidence (Ewert, 1987; Hine, Pretty & Barton, 2009).

There is much evidence that suggests that nature-based therapies might have the potential to be an effective treatment for adults with anxiety disorders. Chang (Chang, 2007) reports a reduced sympathetic nervous system arousal when subjects viewed images of nature, when compared to images of built environments. This can be an indicator of lowered stress and anxiety levels (Craighead et. Al., 2008). The MIND charity ran a study into the effect of the natural environment on mental health, and reported that 71% of the participants felt less tense after a walk through green space. While 90% reported feelings of increased self-esteem (MIND, 2007). In a review of 70 'wilderness experience' papers for the Wilderness Foundation, both physical and mental health benefits were found. Overall physical health improvements included reduced

anxiety and stress, reduced sleep disturbances and reduced hypertension. It was also reported that mental health benefits included positive changes in self-esteem, self-confidence, self-determination, increased self-efficacy, self-image, greater sense of self control and self-empowerment (Hine, Pretty & Barton, 2009, p5)

## **Aims of the study**

The objective of this research is to investigate the therapeutic effectiveness of nature-awareness exercises for the treatment of an adult with anxiety disorder. The study will be submitted to the Beeleaf Institute of Contemporary Psychotherapy as part of the authors studies towards an Advanced Diploma in Contemporary Psychotherapy.

This study presents a study of Amy, a 51 year old woman with generalised anxiety (Craighead et. Al., 2008, p78) who attended a 2 day nature-based therapy workshop run by the author.

It is also the authors aim to expand the research into nature-based therapies as a treatment for anxieties.

## **Health Benefits of Nature**

For millennia we have existed in very close relationship with the natural world, we have been intrinsically connected to the rhythms of our natural environment for our water and food and to the changing of the seasons. The Biophilia Hypothesis (Wilson, 1984) puts forward the idea that humans have an innate need to be close to nature and living things.

There is now much research to support the benefits of nature on our general well-being. Several recent large studies in Japan involving over 1000 subjects, with control groups in built-up environments doing the same activities, have shown that spending time simply walking or contemplating in a forest setting is associated with lower cortisol levels, lower blood pressure, reduced heart rate and increased heart rate variability. (Park et al, 2010)

When the beneficial effects of nature are combined with psychotherapy and counselling processes, we get a nature-based therapy which can leverages the benefits of both worlds.

Researchers working with depressed patients showed that CBT-based psychotherapy carried out in a forest environment produced superior results when compared to the same therapy in a hospital environment. (Kim, Chung & Woo, 2009)

## Overview of Nature-Awareness

Nature-awareness exercises and games have become very popular with many bushcraft and tracking schools in the UK as a fun way for trainee's to expand their awareness of nature, develop their sensory skills, and provide some entertainment after the days training was over. "Bushcraft is considered a long term extension of survival skills" (Wikipedia 2010). Bushcraft is about living in harmony with and thriving in the natural environment longer term, whilst survival skills are about staying alive long enough to be rescued. The nature-awareness exercises are presented as a series of nature-based games, sensory and awareness exercises, primitive skills, meditations, solo reflective time, and group sharing (McMullan, 2008). They are intended to be fun, and to inspire a playful child-like sense of wonder towards nature. Whilst at the same time gently challenging the participants to explore beyond their existing pre-conception of nature and their relationship to it. The opening paragraph in *Sharing Nature with Children* (Cornell, 1998) describes it more poetically:

*"The unutterable beauty of a blossom. The grace of a high flying bird. The roar of the wind in the trees. At one time or another in our lives, nature touches you...and me...and all of us in some personal, special way. Her immense mystery opens to us a little of its stunning purity, reminding us of a Life that is greater than the little affairs of man."*  
(Cornell, 1998, p9)

The nature-awareness games themselves come from a variety of sources. Many originate from the work of Joseph Cornell, a nature-awareness instructor who has worked primarily with children for many years (Cornell, 1998). Geoffrey McMullan along with Hannah Nicholls also added their own games (McMullan, 2008). I have added my own exercise 'Find a Tree Like Me', which blends elements of both nature-awareness and Contemporary Psychotherapy. Other exercises have their origins in primitive living skills, and the tracking and hunting techniques of several aboriginal cultures, particularly North American Indians. Most people these days learn these skills as a way to observe and appreciate nature (Brown Jr., 1983). Heightened awareness is needed to be able to effectively track wild animals by being aware of the slightest disturbances they leave behind in the environment as they move through it. The ability to move quietly



through the natural environment, while blending in and creating as little disruption as possible is also an invaluable skill. (Brown Jr., 1983)

## **Overview of Natural Awareness Therapy**

Geoffrey McMullan an ex-soldier, experienced bushcraft and tracking instructor, and qualified addictions counsellor, developed Natural Awareness Therapy from his experiences whilst using nature-awareness exercises with groups of addicts at a rehabilitation centre. Feedback sheets from those participants listed many psychological benefits that seemed to go way beyond an increased awareness of nature (McMullan, 2012ii). McMullan has since researched nature-awareness interventions for his Master's Degree in Addiction Counselling. He found that the interventions could be effective for adults suffering from addictions. (McMullan 2008)

Natural Awareness Therapy adds a therapeutic intent to the existing nature-awareness games and exercises. Metaphor and symbolism are used throughout, as a way to connect participants new awareness of their reactions and any thoughts provoked by challenges within an exercise, to their mental issues in day to day life (McMullan 2008). Interestingly many of the games use processes which in Self-Relations Psychotherapy terms (Gilligan, 1997) quite effectively quieten the Cognitive Self and increase awareness of and sensitivity to the Somatic Self. This is often referred to in the exercises as 'tuning into your spirit' or your 'heart'.

Nature Awareness Therapy is an ever evolving field, with each facilitator adding their own perspective to it. McMullan encourages the integration of Natural Awareness Therapy into the therapists own particular therapeutic model (McMullan, 2010). The author is trained as a Contemporary Psychotherapist and therefore views the nature-awareness exercises from the perspective of the Contemporary Psychotherapy model.

## **Definition of Contemporary Psychotherapy**

Contemporary Psychotherapy is an integrative outcome orientated model that combines and utilises the commonalities of the main contrasting and effective models of psychotherapy. A contemporary psychotherapist regards no single model of psychotherapy as complete or superior to other models, and is therefore open to the integration of elements of other models into their practice.

(Gawler-Wright, 2012)

A contemporary Psychotherapist is trained in Systemic Neuro-Linguistics and has the practical skills of cognitive, linguistic and behavioural modelling, enabling them to be adaptable to the unique experience and functioning patterns of the client, constantly evolving their model of the clients world according to the clients progress and communication. These advanced modelling skills also allow a practitioner to observe and absorb from the most successful approaches to psychotherapeutic treatment, resulting in a psychotherapy that is flexible and constantly evolving. (Gawler-Wright, 2012).

Contemporary Psychotherapy has an eclectic background, and draws many of its principle ideas from Systemic Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Ericksonian Hypno-Psychotherapy, Self-Relations Psychotherapy, Gestalt Therapy, Family Systems Therapy and recent developments in Neuroscience.

Gawler-Wright describes it as “Contemporary Psychotherapy is a child of Gestalt therapy, Hypnotherapy and Family Systems therapy and a sibling of CBT” (Gawler-Wright, 2006).

Contemporary Psychotherapy has the following defining features (Gawler-Wright, 2012):

1. it is aware of and responds to current advances in its own and other fields of knowledge;
2. it is sensitive to current sociological, cultural and political issues;
3. it works with the full life trajectory – past, present and future – of the client;
4. it responds flexibly to different stages and cycles in the client’s progress;
5. it utilises the naturally occurring cycles and altered states of the human system;
6. it recognises the differing time requirements and time constraints affecting the treatment of each client.

## **Overview of Hermeneutic Single Case Efficacy Design**

Randomised Control Trials (RCT) have dominated psychotherapy research and have been used to make claims about the efficacy of different therapies. The tightly controlled conditions under which they operate have come under much criticism as they often bear little similarity to what actually occurs between a client and a therapist in the consulting room. They are also unable to capture the many subtle and complex interactions that occur between the psychotherapist and the client during the therapy process. As a result they have been criticised as being ‘causally empty’

in that they cannot provide a description of how the client changes have come about (Elliott, 2002). Previously case study methods have been much criticised for reliance on anecdotal evidence, confirmatory bias and ‘narrative smoothing’ (McLeod, 2010). However recent developments in case study research have begun to counter these criticisms.

Hermeneutic Single Case Efficacy Design (HSCED) (Elliott, 2002) is a rigorous and systematic approach based on the judicial system. It incorporates a procedural analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data collected into a rich case record. It involves the development of two opposing arguments, affirmative and sceptic. The affirmative case is developed by the cross-examination of quantitative and qualitative data to produce a plausible argument that attempts to prove that a) the subject did indeed change, and b) they changed as a result of the therapy. In response to the affirmative case, a good faith attempt is made to develop alternate plausible arguments for why the subject changed. Both the affirmative and sceptic arguments are evaluated and rebuttals are presented. The rich case record, affirmative briefs, sceptic briefs, and rebuttals are passed to external judges, who are invited analyse the data and the arguments, and come to their own verdict about the case.

I wanted to test the efficacy of nature-awareness exercises when used therapeutically for the treatment of anxiety. One possible alternative to HSCED would have been the N=1 case study methodology. But it was felt that the tight control required by that methodology would have been too restrictive and possibly wouldn’t allow the subtle complexities of the therapeutic process to emerge.

## **The Participant**

The study participant had been diagnosis with Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) (Craighead et. Al., 2008, p78) by her GP. She satisfies the following DSM IV criteria for GAD: a) for more days than not she feel restless, b) has difficulty concentrating, c) feels irritable, d) is physically tense, e) and has sleep disturbance. Whilst no formal diagnosis has ever been made, she also appears to closely match the DSM IV criteria for Social Phobia as she is a) anxious around unfamiliar people or when she feels she will be scrutinised, b) she fears she will act in a way that is humiliating or embarrassing, c) feared social situations almost invariably provoke anxiety, d) she is aware that the fear is excessive, e) social performance situations are endured or avoided, and f) the anxiety interferes with her normal daily functioning.

The participant has read the anonymised transcripts and report and given her consent for the report, the anonymised interview transcripts and extracts of the transcripts to be used and published.

## Relevance of Nature-Awareness to Contemporary Psychotherapy

I believe that Natural Awareness Therapy and the nature-awareness exercises it is based on relate to at least 4 of the principles of Contemporary Psychotherapy.

1. It is aware of and responds to current advances in its own and other fields of knowledge:

Natural Awareness Therapy and the nature-awareness exercises fit with this principle because this particular form of nature-based therapy integrates modern psychotherapy concepts with ancient wisdom from indigenous cultures, in particular the Native American Indians. Nature-based therapies are currently a rapidly growing area of research.

2. It works with the full life trajectory – past, present and future – of the client: I believe that the nature-awareness exercises fit with this principle because nature-awareness exercises initially bring the participants focus to a grounded somatic awareness based in the current moment. From this position they are then able to work with whatever past, present or future cognitions and somatic experiences that arise. There is no preconceived idea that nature-awareness must only work in one temporal position.

3. It is sensitive to current sociological, cultural and political issues: Our bodies have evolved to work in close harmony with the cycles and rhythms of the natural world (Wilson, 1984). However urbanisation and industrialisation now means that the majority of the world's population live in urban rather than rural areas (World Health Organisation, 2012). With most of the people in Western society now spending over 90% of their time indoors (National Research Council, 1981). It appears that as a society we have become very disconnected from the natural rhythms of nature. There is significant evidence to suggest this causes a number of environmental stressors (pollution, overcrowding, and noise) for the inhabitants of urban areas (Ulrich et al, 1991). For some people the pressure to live a 'greener' life coupled with concerns over the future health of the planet is causing what has been coined 'eco-anxiety' (Nobel, 2007). I believe that the growth in interest in nature-based therapies is a reflection of the disruption of the innate human need to be in connection with nature, combined with the stressors caused by urbanisation and industrialisation. I believe that the emerging nature-based therapies fit perfectly

as an antidote to these modern problems.

4. It utilises the naturally occurring cycles and altered states of the human system: Most of the nature-awareness exercises produce an altered state. In many of the exercises this is a naturally occurring altered state brought about by intense focus, or emotional content as a result of the exercise itself. Other exercises such as the awareness expansion exercise deliberately creates an altered state.

## Method

### Methodology

Randomised controlled trials (RCT) are currently considered to be the method of choice when researching the effectiveness of counselling and psychotherapy. However there are a number of limitations to RCT. The highly controlled conditions used in RCT means that they can often bear little relation to what goes on in the consulting room. They do not capture the subtle and complex interactions between a client and therapist, or the qualities that the client contributes to their own changes. RCT are 'causally empty' (Elliott, 2002) and cannot explain in any detail how the clients changes came about.

Case study research is often dismissed as being unscientific, biased, and anecdotal. However recent case study research has started to address these issues. With a number of researchers developing more robust and systematic approaches for presenting case study research. (McLeod, 2010)

Elliott argued that systematic reasoning is already used to test inferences and make judgements about a single case in many professions. Such as in the medical and legal professions. (Elliott, 2002) This process is hermeneutic and interpretive as it attempts to make sense out of complex and sometimes contradictory information. (McLeod, 2010)

Elliott introduced the HSCED method as 'a set of practical procedures that are transparent, systematic, and self-reflective enough to provide an adequate basis for making inferences about therapy efficacy in single cases' (Elliott, 2002). HSCED uses a rich mix of quantitative and qualitative data gathered from multiple sources, including interviews, questionnaires, outcome measures, information from the client and therapist about the process and outcome. This data is then triangulated in order to examine whether the data converges (McLeod,2010). It attempts to answer the following questions. Did the client change substantially? Did they change as a result of the therapy? What was responsible for the changes?

HSCED bases its processes on methods used by the legal system. Affirmative and sceptic cases are created from a cross examination of both the qualitative and quantitative data. The affirmative case aims to develop a plausible argument that demonstrates that the client did in fact change, and that the change they made is as a result of the therapy. The sceptic case aims to

identify plausible alternative factors that could have been responsible for the change, or that the change itself was insubstantial.

Researchers can unwittingly create a positive bias in the results if they have a preference for a particular type of therapy, and this can undermine the credibility of the research. This has been addressed in this study by inviting two independent psychotherapy practitioners to adjudicate and draw their own conclusions regarding the case.

## Participants

There were several criteria for selecting the research participant. They must have an anxiety disorder. They needed to have an interest in and be willing to take part in outdoor nature-based therapy. They must not currently be participating in any other form of psychotherapy or counselling. As I ideally wanted to do a face-to-face follow-up interview, it was preferable that they also lived within easy travelling distance from Manchester. I have worked with clients using nature-based therapy on both a one-to-one basis and also in outdoor workshops for the last 3 years. So I was able to draw upon an existing list of clients. I began by contacting two people who fulfilled the above criteria, and who had previously verbally expressed an interest in volunteering. They were emailed an invitation letter, an information sheet and consent forms. (See appendices 7 to 10 for details)

## Format

Ideally I would have liked to have worked with the participant on a one-to-one basis using the nature-awareness exercises in weekly outdoor sessions. This would have allowed me to work more naturally and flexibly, adjusting more to the individuals specific needs, but due to time constraints for submission of this study, I was unable to do this. As I already had an open public nature-based therapy workshop organised, I decided to invite the research participant to that instead.

This actually offered a number of benefits. Firstly the participant could be guided through a selection of nature-awareness exercises over the course of a single weekend. The workshop also offered a much more structured format than I would normally use if was working one-to-one with a client. As the efficacy of nature-awareness exercises was the focus of the research, this made more sense as it kept the focus on the exercises themselves and avoided deviation into other interventions. It also ruled out at least some of the influence that I as the therapist might

have on the results.

A big problem with using the workshop format was that there was no weekly gap between sessions for the participant to integrate insights and learnings from the exercises into their daily life. This also significantly reduced the number of points that measures could be taken, as the nature-awareness exercises were effectively run back to back. Inter-exercise measurements would have been largely meaningless, as the participant would not have had any time to integrate any insights into their day to day life.

## **The Workshop**

The workshop itself was held in private woodland over the course of an entire weekend, from Friday afternoon until Sunday afternoon. Participants camped, lived, and took part in workshop activities entirely within the woodland for the entire duration.

The workshop consisted of several exercises per day, with each exercise followed by group discussion, a refreshment break and some time for further reflection and journaling if needed. Exercises and games were either done individually, in pairs or as a group. Exercises lasted anywhere from 20 minutes, up to 3 hours. (See appendix 4 for details)

## **The Exercises**

A workshop timetable, a description of the exercises, and a list of exercises Amy participated in and opted-out of, are available in Appendix 4.

## **The Participant**

The selected client named 'Amy' for the purposes of this study, was a 51 year old woman. Amy had previously attended a two hour ecotherapy taster workshop which I had run earlier in the year. In which I had briefly talked about nature-based therapies, and guided the participants through shortened versions of a few natural-awareness exercises. She therefore had some awareness of what she might encounter on the full workshop.

Amy has lived happily with her husband for the last 23 years. She reported that she has suffered from anxiety and low self-belief since childhood. She indicated that her parents had been



extremely strict and highly critical of her, all throughout her life.

She is currently a self-employed photographer, who struggles to promote her work as she worries about criticism over not doing a good enough job. She has previously worked in administration and managerial positions, and has experienced incidents of bullying in three of her last four jobs.

Over the last 29 years she has undertaken four separate periods of therapy. After leaving university she was diagnosed with agoraphobia by a clinical psychologist who at the time was treating her for severe agoraphobia. She has had two separate period of counselling relating to bullying at work. Over a year ago she was referred for CBT by her GP, who had diagnosed her with generalised anxiety.

During an initial phone interview to gather a case history, the HAM-A scale (Hamilton, 1959) was administered to gauge the level of Amy's anxiety. She scored 25 out of a possible 30, placing her anxiety in the moderate to severe range.

Before taking part in the study Amy completed a consent form on which she gave permission for her anonymised data to be used by the researcher and individuals from the Beeleaf Institute or regulatory authorities relevant to the research. She has agreed to allow the researcher to publish the study and any results found. Her consent to record the follow-up interview was requested verbally before recording began and confirmed again at the very start of the recording. She agreed that the recording could be analysed and the transcript used provided it was anonymised. She was given the opportunity to review the anonymised client case record and transcripts.

### **Other Workshop Participants**

The ecotherapy workshop was also attended by two other people who were not taking part in the research. They were informed of the research, and they requested that they not be mentioned specifically by name in the report. All workshop participants had to sign terms and conditions, part of which asks that they maintain confidentiality. Again at the beginning of the workshop the importance of confidentiality was discussed.

Research data collection was structured so that it was collected either before or after the workshop itself, or outside the workshop activities, either during scheduled reflection time, or in the evening after activities had finished for the day. Therefore data collection had no impact to the structure of the workshop at all, both from Amy's perspective, and the perspective of the

other participants.

## **Therapist & Researcher**

The author, a 43 year old British male, was both the therapist and researcher in this study. He has a diploma in Contemporary Psychotherapy, and also has training in Natural Awareness Therapy, which uses nature-awareness exercises as therapeutic interventions. He has practiced as a trainee psychotherapist for 6 years, and a full-time hypnotherapist, NLP master practitioner and life coach for over 10 years. In his personal life he has received training in bushcraft and survival skills, upon which many of the nature-awareness exercises have their origins. Over the last three years he has facilitated ecotherapy workshops which have primarily used nature-awareness exercises. He has also worked with ecotherapy clients on a one-to-one basis over the last 3 years.

This report forms part of the authors studies for an Advanced Diploma in Contemporary Psychotherapy.

## **Judges**

Two judges volunteered to take part. Judge A is a UKCP registered psychotherapist, qualified Supervisor and EMDR Consultant. Judge B is also a UKCP Registered psychotherapist. Both judges were experienced practitioners in psychotherapy. Unfortunately due to illness and a family crisis, judge B was unable to complete the Judges Opinion form before the study deadline.

## **Measures Used**

Amy completed multiple quantitative and qualitative measures for the study which are described below. The multiple sources of evidence were then assembled into the Rich Case Record which can be found in appendix 1.

## **Quantitative Outcome Measures**

Five quantitative outcome measures were used to assess Amy's changes.

1. Generalised Anxiety Disorder Assessment (GAD7). A commonly used brief measure for assessing the severity of generalised anxiety disorder. (Spitzer, Kroenke & Williams, 2006)
2. Hamilton Anxiety Scale (HAM-A also known as HARS). A practitioner administered

measure of anxiety. (Hamilton, 1959)

3. Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS). A measure of how social anxiety affects a person's life across a variety of common daily situations. (Liebowitz, 1987)
4. Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS). A measure of functional impairment of day to day tasks in the persons life. (Mundt & Marks, 2002)
5. Simplified Personal Questionnaire (PQ). This is a measure of how much an individualised list of client specified problems are bothering them at the time. The problems are stated in the clients own words, and each problem is rated according to how much it is bothering them. A scale of 1 to 7 used with 1 being Not at all, and 7 being Maximum possible. (Wagner & Elliott, 2004)

### **At the start of the workshop**

Amy arrived an hour before the start of the workshop so that the initial measures could be administered. A list of problems she currently experienced that she would like to work on during the workshop was discussed. This list was distilled down into the items in the list shown on table 2 (Amy's Personal Questionnaire Data). She then scored each problem according to how much it currently bothered her, and also indicated the duration of each problem. Amy was given the GAD7, LSAS and WSAS measures to complete. Finally the HAM-A measure was administered by the researcher by discussing each of the questions with Amy and giving them a rating.

The GAD7 and HAM-A measures were used to measure the severity of her generalised anxiety. It was hoped that the GAD7 completed by Amy, and the HAM-A completed by the researcher, would give two different perspectives that would corroborate each other.

During an initial phone interview to gather a case history, it was noted that Amy appeared to exhibit symptoms of social anxiety as well as generalised anxiety. For this reason the LSAS measure was included to specifically measure any reduction in her social anxiety. Her anxiety also appeared to have quite an impact on her day to day life, and in particular her work life. It was decided to also include the WSAS measures as it offered a broader measure of the impact of the anxiety on her ability to cope in her day to day life, and any improvements she might make.

### **At the end of the workshop**

Amy scored the problems she had listed on the PQ form again at the end of the workshop, after the non-research workshop participants had packed up and left. The GAD7, HAM-A, LSAS and WSAS measures were not used at the end of the workshop because it was felt that not enough

time had elapsed since the first set of measures had been taken to give any sort of meaningful results. As Amy had camped in the woodland for the duration of the workshop she had no real opportunity to experience her day to day life.

### **At the 6 week follow-up**

Amy again scored the problems she had listed on the PQ form. She also scored the GAD7, LSAS and WSAS measures. The HAM-A was again administered by the researcher before the Follow-up interview started.

### **Qualitative Assessment**

Two forms of qualitative assessment were used, the Helpful Aspects of Therapy forms, and the semi-structured change interview.

### **End of each day of the workshop**

At the end of each day of the workshop, Amy would return to her tent and complete a separate Helpful Aspects of Therapy (HAT) form (Llewelyn, 1988) for each of the exercises she had participated in on that day. On each HAT form she would write about her experiences of each exercise, and in particular anything she had found particularly helpful or unhelpful. She also rated how helpful or unhelpful she had found it using a 9 point Likert scale (Likert, 1932). Ranging from 1 extremely hindering to 9 extremely helpful, with 5 being neither helpful or hindering. She completed the forms at the end of each day rather than after each exercise, so that the form filling would not intrude upon her workshop experience and that of the other workshop participants.

### **At the 6 week follow-up**

The change interview, a semi-structured interview (Elliott, Slatick & Urman, 2001) took place 6 weeks after the end of the workshop. Due to time restrictions this was the latest the author could leave the follow up interview.

Amy was invited to discuss any changes she had made, and what she thought had contributed to her changes. She was also asked to talk about what she had found particularly helpful or

hindering about the exercises and the workshop in general.

For each of the changes she had described, she was asked to rate 1. How expected or unexpected the change was. 2. How likely it would have been to occur if she hadn't participated in the nature-awareness exercises. 3. And how important the changes were to her.

The interview also explored other possible causes for the changes. Such as changes in medication, lifestyle, relationships, finances or career.

## HSCED Analysis Procedure

### Affirmative case

The purpose of the affirmative case is to persuade the judges that the client changed substantially, and that changes are as a result of the therapy. The affirmative case carried the *burden of proof* (Fleming, 1961) and is therefore presented first. Elliott describes five types of direct evidence linking therapy to the client change. (Elliott, 2002) The affirmative case must find evidence for at least 2 of the following.

#### 1. *Retrospective attribution*

In post therapy interviews the client explicitly states that changes were the result of therapy. This attribution can be a general statement, or specific.

#### 2. *Process-outcome mapping*

The content of post therapy changes can be linked to specific events, processes or events in therapy.

#### 3. *Within therapy process-outcome correlation*

Specific interventions that are implemented by the therapist (e.g. evidence on therapist notes), or specific therapy events (e.g. evidence from HAT), are linked to client change.

#### 4. *Changes in stable problems*

The client has had a long-standing problem and change is observed soon after therapy commences.

#### 5. *Event-Shift Sequences*

Links between reliable gains in the clients PQ scores and significant within therapy events. Looks for a correlation between in session events and subsequent changes in PQ scores. This form of evidence wasn't used, as a) the study didn't use sessions, and b) PQ scores were only collected at the start and end of the workshop, and at the 6 week follow-up. It would therefore have been impossible to correlate between a specific exercise and any subsequent change in PQ.

### **Sceptic case**

The purpose of the sceptic case is the development of good-faith arguments which casts doubt on the affirmative case. It attempts to find alternative explanations for any changes the client may have made and cast doubt on the idea that the client changed at all. This is done systematically by examining the rich case record and collecting evidence for the eight non-therapy explanations listed below. (Elliott, 2002)

- 1 Apparent changes are trivial or irrelevant
2. Apparent changes are due to measurement or other statistical error
3. Apparent changes are due to relational factors (the client feeling appreciative of, or expressing their liking of the therapist or an attempt to please the therapist or researcher)
4. Apparent changes are due to the client conforming to cultural or personal expectancies of change in therapy
5. Improvement is due to resolution of a temporary state of distress or natural recovery
6. Improvement is due to extra-therapy factors (such as change in job or personal relationships etc.)
7. Improvement is due to biological factors (such as medication or herbal remedies)
8. Improvement is due to effects of being in the research

### **Adjudication procedure**

The rich case record and affirmative and sceptic cases were given to the judge for adjudication. The judge was asked to examine the evidence and give their verdict.

They were asked the following questions to determine how much they thought the client had actually changed:

- To what extent did the client change over the course of the natural-awareness workshop?
- How certain are you?
- What evidence presented in the affirmative and sceptic cases mattered most to you in reaching this conclusion?

The judge was then asked the following questions to determine how much they thought the therapy had influenced the client change:

- To what extent is this change due to the natural-awareness exercises?
- How certain are you?
- What evidence presented in the affirmative and sceptic cases mattered most to you in reaching this conclusion?

The following question were asked to elicit which exercises the judge felt were most helpful, and what personal resources enabled the client to make best use of the therapy.

- What therapy processes do you feel were helpful to the client?
- Which characteristics and/or personal resources of the client do you feel enabled her to make best use of her therapy?

### **Variations due to the use of a workshop format**

Rather than multiple weekly sessions with the client, the research participant spent an entire weekend on a residential workshop. Each nature-awareness exercise was treated as a 'Session', and the workshop as the entire 'therapy treatment'. Unlike sessional consulting room based therapy, there was no significant gap between the exercises to allow the participant time to process and integrate changes into their daily lives. Unfortunately this restricted the amount of quantitative data that could be collected. PQ ratings were collected at the start and end of the workshop and at a 6 weeks follow up interview. Outcome measures were collected at the beginning of the workshop and at the follow up interview. Quantitative outcome measures were not collected at the end of the workshop, or after each exercises, as it was felt that the scores

would be largely meaningless as the participant had not had the opportunity to experience their day-to-day life between the exercises.



## Results

The following is a summary of the information in the full rich case record which can be found in Appendix 1.

### Quantitative outcome data

Table 1 shows Amy's pre-workshop and 6 week follow-up scores. All of Amy's scores show a reduction since the initial measures were taken. With two of the scores dropping to either at or just above the clinical caseness cut-off level. The three others scores whilst having dropped, still remain in the clinical range.

Table 1. Amy's Outcome Data

Measure	Caseness Cut-off	Pre-Workshop	6 Week Follow-Up
Generalised Anxiety Disorder 7 (GAD-7)	10	17	11
Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A)	18	24	18
Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scales (LSAS)	55	83	76
Work and Social Adjustment Scales (WSAS)	10	25	21
Personal Questionnaire (PQ)	3.5	6.3	4.8

GAD-7: Range 0-21. Lower scores are better. (Spitzer, Kroenke & Williams, 2006)

HAM-A: Range 0-56. Lower scores are better. (Hamilton, 1959)

LSAS: Range 0-144. Lower scores are better. (Liebowitz, 1987)

WSAS: Range 0-40. Lower scores are better. (Mundt & Marks, 2002)

PQ: Range 1-7. Lower scores are better. Score is the median of PQ items. (Wagner & Elliott, 2004)

Table 2 gives details of Amy’s PQ scores for each of her problem items which she rated at the start and end of the workshop and again at the 6 week follow-up interview.

Table 2. Amy’s Personal Questionnaire data

Item	Duration	Start	End	Follow-up
I am self-critical	>10 year	7	4	5
I lack self-belief	>10 year	6	4	5
I fear being the focus of attention	>10 year	5	4	4
I lose my temper easily	6-10 years	7	4	5
I find it difficult to relax my mind and body	6-10 years	7	5	4
Anxiety affects my relationships	>10 year	6	5	4
I am unassertive	>10 year	6	5	6
I see the negative first	6-10 years	6	3	4
I give up too easily	6-10 years	7	4	5
I lack direction	>10 year	6	5	6
Mean scores		6.3	4.3	4.8

### Qualitative outcome data

In the follow-up interview Amy was asked to identify the changes she had experienced since participating in the nature-awareness exercises during the workshop. The eight changes she identified are shown in Table 3. She expected just one of the changes ‘Better Relaxation’. With a ‘Change of Focus’ and ‘Reduced Alcohol Intake’ being somewhat expected. She says relaxation was expected because of the way the workshop had been described to her. Four of the changes were a complete surprise to her. Amy felt that seven of the eight changes would have been unlikely without taking part in a therapeutic process. She considered six of the changes to be extremely important, one to be very important and one moderately important.

The main changes that Amy has made relate to her perceptions both of herself and what she previously saw as problems. A shift in perspective has allowed her to keep her problems in proportion.

A shift in Amy’s perspective, focus, and an increase in her self-worth, combined with greater relaxation and tolerance of her own flaws, accounts for much of her reported changes. As a consequence, she feels better about herself and is more relaxed, which she contributes to her lower blood pressure, reduced alcohol intake, improved sleep, reduced temper, and improvements in her close relationships.

She reports that a shift in perspective has allowed her to keep her problems in proportion. A widening of her perspective has allowed her a greater awareness of the ‘bigger picture’. Which seems to ‘dilute’ the problem making it seem smaller and less important to her.

She reports that perspective and focus were inter-related. She refers to focus as being what she pays attention to within her widened perspective. She mentions a shift away from focusing on problems and what might go wrong, to a focus on where she is going and her goals.

Focus also refers to making herself the centre of attention, ‘sticking her neck out’, to get what she wants. Something she learned from a baby woodpecker who appeared in one of the exercises.

Self-worth and a greater tolerance of her own flaws were other big change for her. She mentions more self-compassion and a greater awareness of her strengths on both the HAT form and during follow-up interview. Saying that like the tree she too can flourish despite the damage in her life.

She has continued to practice the relaxation and meditative exercises and is able to relax more easily. She has improved her ability to relax by changing her perspective and focus, and by feeling better about herself so that she does not get so angry.

Table 3. Specific changes Amy has identified since the workshop. (From follow-up interview)

Change	How expected/surprising the change was	How likely without therapy	How important is it to you
Improved Perspective	5-Surprised	1-Unlikely	5-Extremely
Change of Focus	2-Somewhat Expected	1-Unlikely	5-Extremely
Improved Self Worth	5-Surprised	1-Unlikely	5-Extremely
Better Relaxation	1-Expected	1-Unlikely	5-Extremely
Lower Blood Pressure	5-Surprised	1-Unlikely	5-Extremely
Improved Sleep	3-Neither	3-Neither	3-Moderately
Reduced Alcohol Intake	2-Somewhat Expected	1-Unlikely	4-Very
Tolerance of Own Flaws	5-Surprised	1-Unlikely	5-Extremely

How expected/surprising the change was: Range 1-5. 1-Expected, 3-Neither, 5-Surprised

How likely without therapy: Range 1-5. 1-Unlikely, 3-Neither, 5-Likely

How important to you: Range 1-5. 1-Not at all, 2-Slightly, 3-Moderately, 4-Very, 5-Extremely

Amy claims that her blood pressure has returned to a normal range. A fact confirmed by a visit to her GP a couple of weeks after the workshop. She feels the relaxation and change in attitude are the cause.

She mentions on both HAT forms and during the interview, a sense of a greater awareness of both herself and a connection to something larger than herself.

## **Affirmative Brief**

The following is a summary of the Affirmative Brief in Appendix 2.

Elliott (Elliott, 2002) suggests five types of evidence that can be used to support the argument that the participant has indeed changed, and that the change was as a result of the therapy. For the affirmative case to be plausible direct evidence must be demonstrated for at least two of the five types of suggested evidence. Supportive evidence has been found for four of the five types and that evidence is summarised here. See Appendix 2 for detailed information.

### 1. Change in stable problem

All of the items identified by Amy on her PQ form are long standing stable problems of at least six years in duration. Six of the issues are over ten years in duration. Some which she mentioned in her screening interview as having been there since childhood. Of those ten long standing problems all but two have shown a reduction. Amy's mean PQ score at the beginning was 6.3, which six weeks later had dropped to 4.8. Whilst still above the clinical cut-off of 3.5, it is a significant change considering the longevity of the problems and the brevity of the workshop.

All of Amy's outcome measures show a drop between the initial and final measurements. Her HAM-A measure has reduced to the clinical cut-off level. While her GAD-7 has reduced to just 1 point above the clinical cut-off level.

### 2. Retrospective attribution

Amy retrospectively attributed seven out of the eight changes she lists (see Table 3) during her follow-up interview as being unlikely to have come about without therapy. This was cited as another source of evidence. Specific comments made by Amy during her follow-up interview which retrospectively link her changes to events within the exercises are listed in the full affirmative brief in the appendix.

### 3. Process to outcome mapping

There are a number of events described by Amy (see HAT forms) during the nature-awareness exercises, that can be plausibly linked to the changes she talks about during the post-workshop follow-up interview. (see Table 3) Some examples of Amy's comments from her HAT forms and comments relating to the change in the follow-up interview. See the appendix 1 for full details.

Improved Perspective: 'It was a clear metaphor for how looking at the wider picture helps 'dilute' obsessional thoughts about negative things, and allows you to be aware of other things which in turn give you a better sense of perspective about problems in your life.'

Change of Focus: 'For me, the lesson was that I should try focusing my attention on my objectives and goals, rather than obstacles in my path.', 'The ultimate lesson I learned was that I spend so much time and effort dwelling on the perceived obstacles and disabilities in my life that I am blind to the bigger picture.'

Improved Self-worth: 'The compassion I felt for the tree was, in effect, compassion for myself, and this was an immensely moving experience because I am the last person in the world I have compassion for.'

Better Relaxation: 'When I eventually stopped fidgeting and sat still, a Robin flew down and sat on a branch in front of me...It sort of illustrated that sometimes you have to stop running around or else all your flapping and shouting frightens people away. If you are quiet and calm you are more likely to attract people to you because you are literally more approachable'

Greater Tolerance of Own Flaws: '...my compassion for the damaged tree helped me recognise and acknowledge areas of my own life and personality which have previously been buried or are in need of repair', 'In a positive sense, this interpretation of the tree helped me realise that, despite being past my prime, and no longer attractive, I still have the ability to be useful and even flourish.'

### 4. Within therapy process to outcome mapping

This type of evidence shows plausible connections between events within the therapy and the

exercises or interventions used. Amy's comments on the HAT forms relate to specific exercises and therefore provide the evidence that she found the nature-awareness exercise to be helpful therapeutically. A more detailed list is available in Appendix 1, Section 5, Table A1.3.

Expanded Awareness: 'It was a clear metaphor for how looking at the wider picture helps "dilute" obsessional thoughts about negative things, and allows you to be aware of other things which in turn give you better sense of perspective about problems in your life.'

Fox-walk: 'The ultimate lesson I learned was that I spend so much time and effort dwelling on perceived obstacles and disabilities in my life that I am blind to the bigger picture'

Sit-spot: 'Seeing the baby woodpecker addressed an anxiety I have about being overlooked or invisible'

Find a Tree Like Me: 'the metaphor device of the tree also helped me see some of my strengths, such as looking after the needs of others and providing support for them. In a positive sense, this interpretation of the tree helped me realise that, despite being past my prime, and no longer attractive, I still have the ability to be useful and even to flourish.'

Rope Walk: 'The fact that I completed this exercise by myself without any practical help was immensely significant to me.'

### Summary of direct evidence.

No change in prescribed or self-prescribed medication or herbal supplements.

No reported changes in Amy's lifestyle, general situation, relationships, or financial status.

### **Sceptic Brief**

This sceptic brief presents several alternative explanations for Amy's changes. The changes were trivial and due to Amy spending relaxing time in the countryside away from the city which she mentions depresses her. Amy clearly states she always feels more relaxed while in the countryside.

There is a possibility of an all or nothing thinking style which could have the effect of exaggerating the rating of both the intensity of the reported problems, and the helpfulness and significance of the change. Which could have the effect of making the changes seem more

dramatic than it was. There was some evidence that Amy may have been attempting to please the therapist with her responses. Almost all of her answers seem to be very positive despite her listing 'I see negatives first' as one of her problems on her PQ form. Amy may also be attributing some of her changes to personal and cultural expectancy artefacts. Improvement may also be due to a period of natural recovery as Amy did state that she had had enough of her lifetime of crippling problems, and had turned up with a determination to change. The sceptic case could find no extra-therapy factors or any change in medication that could be responsible for Amy's changes.

### **Affirmative rebuttal to the sceptic brief**

The affirmative rebuttal challenged the alternative arguments proposed by the sceptic case. Full details are in Appendix 2.

Amy clearly states in her follow-up interview, (C159) that whilst she felt that it was relaxing, it was the way that she was asked to think about her problem during the exercises whilst in the natural environment that enabled her to gain new perspectives on her previous issues. It was proposed that the relaxing effects of nature (Park et al, 2010), and the effects of non-directed attention (Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan, 1995)), combined with a 3 way therapeutic relationship (Berger & McLeod, 2006)) allowed nature itself to act as both a co-therapist and a second positive sponsor (Gilligan, 1997) enabling Amy to feel relaxed, safe and receptive enough to examine her problems and make the changes she made.

Whilst Amy may or may not have given her responses in an exaggerated sense, due to either trying to please the therapist or due to all-or-nothing thinking, there is still plenty of evidence both quantitative and qualitative which suggests that she did indeed make considerable changes.

With regards to personal and cultural expectancy artefacts. Amy has undergone several periods of sometimes prolonged therapy throughout her life (see Appendix 1). Her familiarity with various therapies may go some way to explain both her occasional use of psychological terms and her 'intellectual' position as mentioned in the sceptic brief.

Amy did come to the workshop with a determination to change and whilst this may have given her the motivation to change, she does mention that this would not have been enough, and that it was the exercises that caused her to look at her problems in a particular way. In her follow-up change interview she states:

C159: *“Yes, but I would never make those connections myself. You still get that therapeutic effect of relaxation when you walk in the countryside. But it would never have occurred to me to naturally make those connections to my problems or to look at the tree and seeing it as myself or to actually use what was around me and apply to my own life.”*

### **Sceptic rebuttal to affirmative rebuttal**

In summary the sceptic view was that Amy did change, and that she had gained considerable insight, and new positive ways of thinking about herself, her anxieties and related issues. This seems to have had a positive knock on effect in terms of reduced blood pressure, better self-image and improved relaxation skills. However most of Amy's outcome measure still lie within the clinical range, and there is simply not enough evidence to confirm that any improvements made so far are stable.



## Adjudication

The judge independently came to their own conclusions after studying both the material in the rich case record (see Appendix 1), and the affirmative and sceptic cases and rebuttals (see Appendix 2). The results are presented in Table 4, and summarised below.

Table 4. Adjudication decisions

Question	Judge A
1a. To what extent did the client change over the course of the natural-awareness workshop?	70%
1b. How certain are you?	80%
2a. To what extent is this change due to the natural-awareness exercises?	80%
2b. How certain are you?	70%

1a, 2a scale: 0% - No change, 20% - Slightly, 40% - Moderately, 60% - Considerably, 80% - Substantially, 100% - Completely

## Summary of opinions about change over course of therapy

Judge A reviewed and compared several of the sources of information when making their decision. In particular Amy's PQ scores, and especially the difference between those at the start of workshop and six weeks later. Also the Helpful Aspects of Therapy forms, and the narrative account obtained in the follow-up interview, paying somewhat more attention to the detailed narrative account compared to the scores. Judge A felt that client compliance and measurement error may have had an effect.

## Summary of opinions about whether change was due to therapy

Judge A reviewed both the scores given by the client and her narrative account both at the end of the day (HAT forms) and the follow up interview.

Judge A felt that client compliance may have had some effect, on the scores. But felt that in the follow up interview Amy seemed to be giving an authentic response, and that she was able to say that there were still aspects that hadn't changed (e.g. staying asleep is still an issue).

Judge A also thought that some of the changes may be a domino effect, and gave the example of Amy taking up meditation on a daily basis, as well as going to meditation classes which may have had a positive effect on reducing her anxiety/feeling more relaxed. This in turn would have had a positive effect on her sleep and blood pressure. So, some of the changes may have started only *post* workshop. Judge A also stated that the environment placed Amy “in a receptive state of mind”. because she mentions several times that she feels safe and comfortable in nature itself.

Judge A believes other factor were at play beyond the exercises themselves as Amy clearly states that “it’s an equal combination of the environment, how everything was directed, by the facilitator and the support that I felt from the other people”.

### **Mediator Factors**

The judges were asked to comment on which aspects of the workshop they felt had been most helpful to Amy.

Judge A mentions the exercises that provided 100% counter evidence for Amy’s limiting beliefs. She specifically mentioned the ‘Find a Tree Like Me’ exercise because “the client says that ‘trees have always made her feel safe’”.

### **Moderator Factors**

The judges were asked what characteristics or personal resources they thought Amy had brought to the workshop which enabled her to make the best use of her therapy.

Judge A noted that it was the determination which Amy brought to the therapy and her willingness to do things – “though after some gentle persuasion by the facilitator – to do things she had never done before, allowing her to have a bodily felt experience of change.”

## Relevance to Contemporary Psychotherapy

Both the Fox Walk and Sit-Spot exercises that Amy found helpful are based on the wisdom of Native American Indians. That wisdom has been brought into a modern therapeutic context which shows that nature-awareness is flexible and yielding to the progression of knowledge over time.

Amy's determination to change combined with feeling in a more receptive state (C161) brought on by her being in a natural environment, gave her the undirected raw motivational energy and a mental state which was more open to change. What was missing was a direction to channel that energy. The natural-awareness exercises provided that by providing a way for Amy explore, gain insight, and find her own way to channel and direct that energy, allowing her to change in a way that was most appropriate to her. This is an illustration of responding 'with time' to the person as they are right now.

The Find a Tree Like Me exercise which Amy participated in shows that nature-awareness exercises can be used to work with the full life trajectory of the participant. It uses the metaphor of two trees to gain new insight and perspectives on past problem, and to find positive resources, that can enable different ways of responding in the present and future.

## Discussion

The general consensus of the author and the external judge was that Amy did considerably reduce her levels of anxiety as a direct result of the nature-awareness exercises used within the workshop.

Whilst a number of her outcome measures still remain within the clinical range, the change is seen as considerable. Particularly given the brevity of the workshop, and the longevity and stability of her problems. In the two measures specifically designed to measure generalised anxiety, Amy's score dropped to the clinical caseness cut-off level on the HAM-A measure, and to just 1 point above caseness cut-off level for the GAD-7. The two other measures showed an improvement but still remained within the clinical ranges. There is little argument that Amy did show improvement in her levels of anxiety, as well as making improvements to her self-esteem, lowering her blood pressure, improving her ability to relax, and reducing her anger. What is less clear is the longer term stability of the change, and the proportion of the change that can be attributed directly to her participation in the nature-awareness exercises. A longer study with further follow-up measurements would have helped to show if the changes had stabilised.

Both the judge and the sceptic case mention client compliance. The judge felt compliance may have had some effect on the scores, but that Amy's responses in the interview did seem authentic, as she was also able to say that there were still aspects that hadn't changed. Again both the judge and sceptic case mention relaxation. With the sceptic case arguing that the relaxation Amy had experienced during her time in the woodland had been what had influenced the changes. Amy herself discounts this during the follow-up interview saying she can feel relaxed when she is out in nature, but that relaxation soon disappears when she leaves and returns to the city. The judge however wondered if some of the changes (blood pressure, sleep) only started post workshop, due to Amy continuing the relaxation exercises on a daily basis, and also starting a weekly meditation class. The judge also felt that Amy's own determination to change was a contributing factor.

As well as showing that nature-awareness was effective as a treatment for anxiety, the study has given insights into how the participant perceives the nature-awareness exercises, and what aspects of the exercises they found beneficial. Amy mentions a number of the exercises as being helpful. In particular she rates the Find a Tree Like Me, Fox Walking, Rope Walk, Awareness Exercises and the Sit Spot as being greatly to extremely helpful. A number of general themes emerge from an examination of the interview transcript and the HAT forms, with regard to what

Amy attributes the changes to:

- A relaxing environment that allowed her to feel safe.
- A sense of connection with something larger than herself (nature) while at same time being comfortably aware of herself.
- A widening or shifting of her perspective, allowing her to step out of her usual viewpoint and see herself and her problems differently.
- A change in what she chooses to focus on within that widened perspective.
- The nature-awareness exercise acting as a metaphor, enabling her to step outside her existing limiting viewpoint and see herself and her problems differently.
- The metaphor also acting as a way to suggest new ways of thinking, feeling and reacting.
- Challenges (social, physical, mental) that are just intense enough for her to perceive as a risk and feel anxious, but which she actually does achieve. Enabling her to push back the boundaries of what she believes about herself and what she is capable of, and thereby countering her limiting beliefs.
- Therapist direction and encouragement.
- A determination to change.

Due to limitation imposed by the research design, the duration of Amy's treatment was restricted in length. While she does appear to have made considerable changes to her generalised anxiety within a short space of time, some of her problems still lie within the clinical range. It would have been interesting to see if a continuation of her treatment would have helped her reduce her anxiety levels further? I believe it would, but this is something that only further research would confirm. It also raises the question: is a single weekend workshop a suitable format for working with clients with severe anxiety? I personally feel it isn't unless there is additional on-going support outside of the workshop. Regular one-to-one sessions or regular group sessions making use of nature-awareness may be much more suitable and beneficial for the treatment of this severity of anxiety, as the treatment would continue until resolution has been achieved. But again further research would obviously need to be carried out to confirm the efficacy of this format. With regard to testing the efficacy of the nature-awareness exercises, the workshop format has worked, in that it has provided enough plausible evidence to show that changes were made and that the changes can be linked to the exercises. The more structured use of the exercises in a group setting has also helped minimise the effects of other variables.

One aspect that I feel in hindsight needed much more attention within this report was documenting my own interactions with Amy. This was largely played down because I felt the focus of the study was on the efficacy of the exercises themselves. Unlike more traditional talking therapies, there is not usually a lot of discussion during the exercises. However questions that are asked or suggestions made at opportune moments during the exercises, or in the group discussions which would obviously have an impact. I think it would also have given a fuller rich case record.

My overall experience of the HSCED methodology itself has been positive. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data, and a rigorous systematic approach to the analysis, combined with the use of external judges has I feel helped to reduce many of the problems such as therapist bias, that have generated much of the criticism that many psychotherapy case studies have received.

### **Relevance to Contemporary Psychotherapy**

I believe that natural-awareness exercises complement the Contemporary Psychotherapy model in several ways and fits a number of its principles. Meaning that anyone trained in Contemporary Psychotherapy could easily integrate them into their own practice and expand the range and flexibility of their work.

#### It is sensitive to current sociological, cultural and political issues

People are currently more disconnected than ever from the natural world. This is largely due to industrialisation and urbanisation, as more than half of the world's population now live in urban rather than rural areas. This relatively rapid shift to an urban environment produces a number of environmental stressors such as overcrowding, noise and pollution. We now spend 90% of our life indoors away from the natural cycles of nature. Concerns over the state of the planet are big political issues, and are in most people's awareness. All these concerns together produce what some believe is a unique set of stressors that occur as a result of our disconnection from the natural world, conflicting with our innate need to be connected to nature. Amy herself mentions that she finds the city depresses her and she feels boxed in with her problems, and that the feeling lifts when she is in out the countryside. Which seems to suggest she may be suffering from some level of environmental stress from living in the city, plus a disconnection from nature. One possible timely solution is nature-based therapy which amongst other things aims to

reconnect our innate human need for relationship with nature.

#### It works with the full life trajectory of the client

The Find a Tree Like Me exercise which Amy participated in shows that nature-awareness exercises can be used to work with the full life trajectory of the participant. It uses the metaphor of different trees to gain new insight and perspectives on past problem, and to find positive resources, that can enable different ways of responding in the present and future.

#### It utilises the naturally occurring cycles and altered states of the human system

Most of the natural-awareness exercises use either naturally occurring altered states, as a result of intense focus, emotional content or as a product of restricting the sense of sight while blindfolded.

Deliberately altered states are created during the guided meditations and trance work.

## **Conclusions**

In conclusion both the author and the judge believe that Amy did make a considerable change, and that the change can be directly attributed to the nature-awareness exercises that she participated in during the workshop.

Amy reported a number of changes including a change in perspective and focus, better tolerance of her flaws, greater self-esteem, lower blood pressure, less angry, improved relaxation and better sleep. Amy herself clearly attributes her changes directly to the nature-awareness exercises. But both the judge and sceptic case reporting that there may also be an element of client compliance which may have exaggerated her claims. The judge also wondered if the daily relaxation that Amy started, may have caused some of her changes to occur post workshop. However there is plenty of evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, which supports that the exercises did have a positive impact on reducing Amy's anxiety. The only questions that remains are how much if any of the change is attributable to other factors, and how stable the changes are in the long term. Further follow-up measurements would need to have been taken to confirm that the changes had stabilised.

Nevertheless given the shortness of the workshop, and long duration and stability of Amy's anxiety, these changes are all the more remarkable.

This study extends previous findings (McMullan 2008) that nature-awareness has the potential to be used as an effective therapeutic intervention. This study provides evidence that nature-awareness exercises can potentially be effective as a treatment for generalised anxiety. Further case studies would need to be carried out to determine if the benefits that Amy experienced would generalise to a wider population.

It is hoped that the study will be of benefit to a number of people, groups and organisations. It will primarily help those suffering from anxiety and those therapists responsible for treating them by expanding the range of treatment options. In the long term nature-based therapies are cheaper than drugs so there may be financial incentives for organisations to incorporate them.

## **Recommendations for further research**

Whilst Amy appears to have made considerable changes to her generalised anxiety as a result of her experience with the nature-awareness exercises, some of her problems still lie within the clinical range for a number of her measures. Would a longer treatment have helped her reduce her anxiety levels further? I believe it would, but this is something that only further research would confirm.

Questions arose over the suitability of a single weekend workshop format for working with clients with severe anxiety because of the limited length of the treatment. I feel regular one-to-one sessions or regular group sessions making use of nature-awareness would be much more suitable and beneficial for the treatment of this severity of anxiety, as the treatment would continue until resolution has been achieved. But again further research would obviously need to be carried out to confirm the efficacy of longer term use of nature-awareness as a therapeutic treatment.

This case study provides plausible evidence that nature-awareness exercises helped Amy to reduce her generalised anxiety. However the findings from a single case cannot be generalised to a wider population. To determine if the benefits would generalise, further research needs to be carried out with a larger group of participants.



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# Appendices

# Appendix 1: Rich Case Record

## Section 1: Background/Ethical Issues

### Confidentiality

In order to protect the participant's identity, they are referred to by a different name, and other identifying details have been disguised. The participant will be referred to as Amy in this report.

### Consent

Amy was approached to see if she would be interested in participating in the research as she had attended an introductory ecotherapy workshop that the author had run earlier in the year as part of a local green festival. Through that workshop the author knew Amy had anxiety issues. She was sent a letter and given an information sheet about the research and an informed consent form. Consent was also sought before recording the follow-up change interview. Amy reviewed the client description, the description of the workshop and exercises, and the anonymised transcript and gave her consent for these to be used in the research. Amy also gave her consent for the work or parts of it to be published provided it remain anonymous.

### Therapist competence

The therapist holds a diploma in contemporary psychotherapy and has had additional training in the use of Nature-awareness exercises as a therapeutic tool. He also has training in bushcraft and survival skills, upon which many of the nature-awareness exercises are based. He has practiced as a trainee psychotherapist for 6 years, and a full-time hypnotherapist, NLP master practitioner and life coach for over 10 years. The therapist has been running outdoor nature-based therapy workshops for the last 3 years. He has also for the past 2 years seen individual clients for one-to-one nature-based therapy in the nature reserve near his private practice in Manchester.

### Context

Amy took part in a weekend Ecotherapy workshop with two other participants who were not participating in the research. The workshop was residential and involved camping in private woodland from Friday afternoon until Sunday afternoon. All participants stayed in the woodland for the entire weekend. Amy was not charged for the workshop and her travel expenses were reimbursed.



## Section 2: The Client

### Client Descriptions

Amy is a 51 year old married woman who has lived with her husband for 23 years. They have no children. She has suffered from anxiety and low self-belief since childhood. This manifests itself in her day to day life as anger, constant worrying, chronic insomnia, perfectionism, and being very self-critical. She has fears of being criticism, being noticed, and being overlooked.

She is currently self-employed as a photographer and whilst she is very confident in her abilities as a photographer, she finds it hard to promote her work as she does not believe in herself and feels that people may criticise what she does. She is educated to degree level and has previously been employed in various administrative and managerial roles. Her only period of unemployment was when she developed agoraphobia, shortly after leaving university. The agoraphobia intensified to the point where she became almost completely housebound. Over a year of Transactional Analysis enabled her to overcome the agoraphobia and begin work. Currently the agoraphobia only bothers her when she is in overcrowded public transport or indoor events with large crowds. She is otherwise able to cope with her general day to day life.

She has been subjected to severe bullying in three out of her four previous jobs. As a result of this she has undergone two separate year long periods of counselling with the in-house counsellors of the organisations she worked for at the time. She says that she did not find either period of counselling particularly helpful, other than as a vent for her emotion. Her current anger problems, increased negativity, and insomnia began during this period.

6 months, prior to the workshop, Amy also received several months' of CBT sessions arranged through her doctor. This was focused on her anxiety and self-esteem. She felt that it had been somewhat helpful, in that she had become more aware of what she was thinking and how she was behaving, but that it hadn't really had much overall impact on her problems.

Amy's parents and younger brother are very unsupportive and actively seem to go out of their way to criticise her. She describes her parents as being very strict, and overly critical and controlling, and that they have set very high standards for her. Throughout her life she has been constantly criticised by them, and made to feel she never measures up. She now lives at the opposite end of the country to distance herself from them and keeps irregular contact with them. She does have a supportive husband and supportive group of friends.

## **Strengths**

Amy appeared to be at a point in her life where she was highly motivated to change. She was very self-aware and was able to very clearly articulate both what she was thinking and feeling, and what she wanted.

She appeared to have a realistic expectation of what might be achievable over the course of a weekend workshop.

## **Medically Relevant Information**

Amy has suffered from Meniere's Disease (Osborne, 2012), for many years. Meniere's disease affects the inner ear causing both balance and hearing problems. The main symptoms are vertigo, tinnitus and hearing loss.

She has also suffered from Early Onset Menopause (Petras, 1999) for which she is currently taking Hormone Replacement Therapy.

## **Medication and Herbal Supplements**

See Table A1.6 and A1.7 in Appendix 1 Section 6.

## **Previous Experience of Nature-based Therapies**

Amy had previously attended a short introductory ecotherapy workshop the therapist had run earlier in the year as part of a local green festival. Amy therefore had some prior awareness of what she might expect in terms of the exercises and general workshop format.

## Section 4: Quantitative Outcome Data

### Outcome Measures

Table A1.1. Amy's Outcome Data

Measure	Caseness Cut-off	Pre-Workshop	6 Week Follow-Up
Generalised Anxiety Disorder 7 (GAD-7)	10	17	11
Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A)	18	24	18
Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scales (LSAS)	55	83	76
Work and Social Adjustment Scales (WSAS)	10	25	21
Personal Questionnaire (PQ)	3.5	6.3	4.8

GAD-7: Range 0-21. Lower scores are better. HAM-A: Range 0-56. Lower scores are better. LSAS: Range 0-144. Lower scores are better. WSAS: Range 0-40. Lower scores are better. PQ: Range 1-7. Lower scores are better. Score is the mean of PQ items.

### Personal Questionnaire Data (PQ)

The simplified Personal Questionnaire (Wagner & Elliott, 2004) was used to identify in the participants own words, the main problems they wished to resolve during the workshop. At the beginning of the workshop Amy identified the list of problems, duration and severity of each problem using a 7 point scale, whereby a score of one indicates that the problem is not causing the client any distress at all, through to 7 whereby the problem is causing the maximum distress possible. Amy then rated the severity of the problems again at the end of the workshop, and finally 6 weeks later as part of the follow up Change Interview.

Table A1.2. Amy's Personal Questionnaire data

Item	Problem Duration	Workshop Start	Workshop End	6 Week Follow-up
I am self-critical	>10 year	7	4	5
I lack self-belief	>10 year	6	4	5
I fear being the focus of attention	>10 year	5	4	4
I lose my temper easily	6-10 years	7	4	5
I find it difficult to relax my mind and body	6-10 years	7	5	4
Anxiety affects my relationships	>10 year	6	5	4
I am unassertive	>10 year	6	5	6
I see the negative first	6-10 years	6	3	4
I give up too easily	6-10 years	7	4	5
I lack direction	>10 year	6	5	6
Mean scores		6.3	4.3	4.8

## Section 5: Helpful Aspects of Therapy Form Data

The Helpful Aspects of Therapy forms (Llewelyn, 1988) were completed by the client at the end of each day. The form asks the client to describe what aspects of each of the days exercises were most helpful or meaningful (Table A1.3), and also anything they found unhelpful or hindering (Table A1.4). The form asks the client to rate these aspects using a 9-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932) where 9 is extremely helpful and 1 is extremely hindering. The completed HAT forms can be found in Appendix 5, Section 2.

### Summary of the Helpful Aspects of Therapy

Table A1.3: Helpful Aspects of Therapy

Exercise Name	Helpful aspects of therapy/ What made it helpful	Rating Range 1 to 9 1 - Extremely hindering 5 - Neutral 9 - Extremely Helpful
Expanded Awareness	<p>HAT Form 1, Question 2. 'For me personally this was very relevant to one of the main issues/problems I came to the workshop to work on: namely anxiety which arises from getting things out of proportion and making difficulties the focus of my attention. '</p> <p>HAT Form 1, Question 2. 'It was a clear metaphor for how looking at the wider picture helps "dilute" obsessional thoughts about negative things, and allows you to be aware of other things which in turn give you better sense of perspective about problems in your life. '</p> <p>HAT Form 1, Question 2. 'For me, the lesson was that I should try focusing my attention on my objectives and goals, rather than obstacles in my path.'</p> <p>HAT Form 1, Question 2. 'A buzzard circling overhead during the exercise reinforced the message that things must be kept in perspective.'</p>	9
Fox Walk	<p>HAT Form 3, Question 2. 'It was a huge surprise to me to find that I could use my other senses to keep my balance and maintain my direction.</p> <p>HAT Form 3, Question 2. 'I had triumphed over both mental and physical adversity and was really surprised and made me happy by my success.'</p> <p>HAT Form 3, Question 7b. 'The ultimate lesson I learned was that I spend so much time and effort dwelling on perceived obstacles and disabilities in my life that I am blind to the bigger picture'</p>	9
Sit-Spot (Saturday Morning)	<p>HAT Form 2, Question 2. 'I felt comfortable and protected sitting in the tree's centre, but found it hard to get all my thoughts out of my mind and to sit still.</p>	7

	<p>My attention kept wandering off, but it was good to be forced into slowing myself down.'</p> <p>HAT Form 2, Question 6b.</p> <p>'It sort of illustrated that sometimes you have to stop running around or else all your flapping and shouting frightens people away.'</p>	6
Sit-Spot (Saturday Evening)	<p>HAT Form 5, Question 2.</p> <p>'felt entirely safe and pleasant. I felt like I was completely part of the landscape, rather than a visitor. I felt included.'</p> <p>HAT Form 5, Question 6b.</p> <p>'I don't normally fit in anywhere and stand out like a sore thumb, so that was a nice feeling to belong.'</p>	7.5  8
Sit-Spot (Sunday Morning)	<p>HAT Form 6, Question 2.</p> <p>'This taught me that sometimes we need to be patient. To sit quietly and just wait for the things we want to come to us.'</p> <p>HAT Form 6, Question 2.</p> <p>'Listening helps me not to miss the smaller things in life, whilst jumping up and down and complaining and giving up drives away things which might have been positive for me.'</p> <p>HAT Form 6, Question 6b.</p> <p>'Seeing the baby woodpecker addressed an anxiety I have about being overlooked or invisible '</p> <p>HAT Form 6, Question 6b.</p> <p>'If you hide in the tree, no one will know you are there or that you need something. You have to speak up.'</p>	9    9
Rope Walk	<p>HAT Form 7, Question 2.</p> <p>'Nigel's gentle reassurance gave me the confidence to at least give it a go. The environment of support made me feel comfortable enough to attempt the exercise'</p> <p>HAT Form 7, Question 2.</p> <p>'...I worried at first that I might trip and hurt myself. However, I was aware of Nigel being close at hand, constantly talking me through it, reassuring me that it was perfectly OK to take my time.'</p> <p>HAT Form 7, Question 6b.</p> <p>'The fact that I completed this exercise by myself without any practical help was immensely significant to me.'</p>	8
Find a Tree Like Me	<p>HAT Form 8, Question 2.</p> <p>'I think what I got out of this event was a high degree of insight into my own character and life.'</p> <p>HAT Form 8, Question 2.</p> <p>'Being compelled to project my own traits and history onto something else seemed to give me more freedom than if I was asked to simply describe myself, which I usually find very hard to do.'</p> <p>HAT Form 8, Question 2.</p> <p>'Sometimes it's hard to see yourself honestly, as you really are without some kind of help, and this worked very effectively for me.'</p> <p>HAT Form 8, Question 2.</p> <p>'I think even more than anything, my compassion for the damaged tree helped me recognise and acknowledge areas of my life and personality which have previously been buried or are in need of</p>	9

	<p>repair.’ HAT Form 8, Question 2. ‘This was powerful because I am generally not very forgiving of flaws in myself, so the detachment of pretending I was talking about a tree was quite liberating.’</p> <p>HAT Form 8, Question 2. ‘the metaphor device of the tree also helped me see some of my strengths, such as looking after the needs of others and providing support for them. In a positive sense, this interpretation of the tree helped me realise that, despite being past my prime, and no longer attractive, I still have the ability to be useful and even to flourish.’</p> <p>HAT Form 8, Question 6b. ‘The compassion I felt for the tree was, in effect, compassion for myself, and this was an immensely moving experience because I am the last person in the world I have compassion for.’</p>	9
Tracking Intentions	<p>HAT Form 4, Question 2. ‘ I found it hard to spot signs in the sandy ground, but the exercise taught me to persevere and look more closely.’</p> <p>HAT Form 4, Question 2. ‘it helped prove to myself that I do actually have quite good observational skills.’</p>	6

## Summary of the Hindering Aspects of Therapy

Table A1.4: Hindering Aspects of Therapy

<b>Exercise Name</b>	<b>Hindering aspects of therapy/ What made it hindering</b>	<b>Rating Range 1 to 9 1 - Extremely hindering 5 - Neutral 9 - Extremely Helpful</b>
Expanded Awareness	HAT Form 1, Question 7. ‘During the expanded awareness exercise it started to rain heavily’	4
Fox Walk	HAT Form 3, Question 7b. ‘I was hindered at first by my own doubts and anxieties about how well I would be able to perform this task, based on concerns about my balance difficulties.’	4
Sit-Spot (Saturday Morning)	HAT Form 2. Question 7b. ‘My backside went to sleep because I was sitting awkwardly in the tree, trying to get into a balanced position!’	4
Rope Walk	HAT Form 7, Question 7b. ‘I was acutely aware of the fact that all the other participants had completed the exercise ahead of me, and in all likelihood were watching me, and that initially made me feel self-conscious’	4
Tracking Intentions	‘I admit that the concept didn't 'click' with me immediately, and I found it hard to spot signs in the sandy ground, but the exercise taught me to persevere and look more closely. It didn't teach me anything in particular the, but it helped prove to myself that I do actually have quite good observational skills. ’	6

## **Section 6: Change Interview Data**

The Amy participated in a follow up Change Interview (Elliott, Slatick, & Urman, 2001) six weeks after the workshop. The Change Interview protocol invites the participant to reflect on the therapy and to identify specific changes they experienced during the course of the workshop. The participant is invited to comment on the mechanisms of those changes and what they attribute those changes to.

The data in Table A1.5 lists Amy's self-identified changes from her Change Interview. Information about Amy's medication, both prescribed and self-prescribed, as well as duration and adjustments are shown in Table A1.6 and Table A1.7.



Table A1.5. Specific changes Amy has identified since the workshop.

Change	How expected/surprising the change was	How likely without therapy	How important is it to you
Improved Perspective	5-Surprised	1-Unlikely	5-Extremely
Change of Focus	2-Somewhat Expected	1-Unlikely	5-Extremely
Improved Self Worth	5-Surprised	1-Unlikely	5-Extremely
Better Relaxation	1-Expected	1-Unlikely	5-Extremely
Lower Blood Pressure	5-Surprised	1-Unlikely	5-Extremely
Improved Sleep	3-Neither	3-Neither	3-Moderately
Reduced Alcohol Intake	2-Somewhat Expected	1-Unlikely	4-Very
Tolerance of Own Flaws	5-Surprised	1-Unlikely	5-Extremely

How expected/surprising the change was: Range 1-5. 1-Expected, 3-Neither, 5-Surprised  
 How likely without therapy: Range 1-5. 1-Unlikely, 3-Neither, 5-Likely  
 How important to you: Range 1-5. 1-Not at all, 2-Slightly, 3-Moderately, 4-Very, 5-Extremely

Table A1.6: Prescribed Medication

Medication	For what Symptoms?	Dose/Frequency	How long?	Last Adjusted?
Cyclo-Progynova	Menopausal symptoms	Daily	6 years	-
Melatonin	Insomnia	Daily	3 months	-
Temazepam	Insomnia	Occasional use	2 years	-
Phenergan	Insomnia	Daily	4 years	-
Diazepam	Anxiety	Never taken	4 years	-

Table A1.7: Self-Prescribed Medication and Herbal Medication

Name	For what Symptoms?	Dose/Frequency	How long?	Last Adjusted?
St. John Wort	Depression	Daily	3 months	-
Kava Kava	Anxiety	Daily	3 months	-
Stugeron	Meniere's Disease	When needed	years	-
Hawthorn	Hypertension	Daily	6 months	-

## Helpful and Unhelpful Therapy Process Identified in Follow-Up Change Interview

Below is a list of snippets from responses from the client during the follow-up Change Interview conducted six weeks after the workshop.

*Key: R=Researcher; C=Client*

### Helpful Therapy Processes

C3: It was good, it was really different for me because I've never done anything in a group setting before in terms of therapy. I've had therapy a few years before and counselling, but it has always been one-to-one. Sharing my fears and innermost feelings in front of a group of other people was simultaneously quite nerve racking but liberating at the same time. These were other people who were in the same boat as me.

R6: So it sounds like participating in the group in itself was therapeutic?

C5: Yes. It was something I didn't think I was going to be able to do, I was just going to sit back and observe and listen to other people so actually no one was more surprised than me at the level of participation that I had during the group sessions. Particularly as you're making yourself vulnerable, really you are talking about your innermost feelings and insecurities and that is something I generally feel uncomfortable with. There is something about the natural environment as well that made me feel more relaxed.

R7: Does simply being in nature allow you to be more comfortable?

C6: Yes. It's also dispels a lot of the anxieties that I would have had normally in a group setting plus I am quite claustrophobic and agoraphobic I am not comfortable in an enclosed environment with other people and the more people that there are in the more uncomfortable I feel.

C6: ... I think if I had been in a group therapy setting in a room I would have been too anxious to have participated so I think the environment was a very key part of the process for me and it enabled me to feel comfortable enough to take part in speaking up.

R8: So despite being in a situation in which you would normally not have felt comfortable enough to speak up, you actually found that you could relax enough to participate fully?

C7: ... Whereas for some reason being in the countryside, the open environment, the anxieties just went. I was very surprised! I can only attributed that to two things, one was the way that the workshop was facilitated, and how comfortable we were made to feel, by you. And the other participants were also very nurturing and welcoming. And the environment because it was very open literally open. The natural landscape itself was like a nurturing thing. If that makes sense.

R9: Could you describe in a little more detail about the nurturing side of nature?

C8: There has always been something about the natural environment, and trees in particular, trees and water. I think that make me feel safe and comfortable, it's like a primal thing, it's how things should be.

R10: So you used the word disconnected, does that mean that you felt connected to nature?

C9: Yeah, it was like the polar opposite of how I normally feel because I have been raised in the countryside, and I have been brought up with a strong connection with my environment, and I feel happy in the natural environment. I've now spent more than 20 years in a built up environment, man-made. I find it very claustrophobic, and depressing, and unnatural. I feel the more time I spend in it, the more disconnected I become and that is a stressful thing for me.

R13: Something about that scenario has shifted because you were able to talk more freely without anxiety in the group?

C14: Yeah it was a real surprise to me!

R14: What do you specifically attributed that to, what was going on in your mind and your body?

C15: Well my anxiety levels were down because I didn't feel judged because I felt safe, because I felt nurtured by the environment, and I felt comfortable.

C18: There was a lot of humour in it, which I liked as well. It wasn't just all serious. I like the fact that you brought humour into it. It was relaxed and fun. A lot of it was fun, we were making serious changes and tackling serious issues, at least for me. But it was done in a way which did make me feel comfortable, it was light-hearted and I think the elements of humour that were brought into it also made me feel relaxed as well. It is a diffusing thing, isn't it.

R17: How have you been doing just in general since the workshop?

C19: A lot better. I came to the workshop specifically to work on just one or two issues and I ended up finding that there were a whole load of related issues that came up during the workshop almost like a domino effect, but a positive domino effect

C19: ...A lot of the insights that came from doing some of the exercises were fairly profound actually. There were some exercises that was so emotionally moving, one in particular, that it made a permanent shift in the way that I looked at myself definitely, and also altering my perspective of how I look at my problems, and how I approach my life. I think because some of them were so powerful that they stuck with me in a way that a year of counselling hadn't done.

R18: So even though it has only been five or is it six weeks since the workshop are there any changes that have stayed with you?

C20: Yeah definitely I think the perspective is that the one I keep coming back to. There were a few of the exercises that we did that raise that issue, or I suppose my subconscious raised the issue and the environment give me answers.

C20: ...It has really helped not to get things out of proportion; it was a big part of what drew me to the workshop.

C20: .... It was kind of like that and the sensory perception exercises in particular brought one up for me, literally into sharp focus, it showed me what an issue that was for me and how to alter it.

R25: What changes if any have you noticed in yourself since the workshop?

C30: I'd say the perspective is a big one for me, it cropped up in a number of the exercises.

C30: ... And not just in the exercises but also in my experience outside the exercises, provided by the environment.

C30: ... In the sensory expansion exercise, it gave me the idea of perspective and widening one's perceptions gives you a wider picture. Instead of focusing on the small things you see the bigger picture and that itself is very helpful because you are then not focusing on just the negatives, you are seeing everything else and you realise that what you were focusing on is just a tiny thing that is not such a big deal when you look at in the wider picture.

C31: Focus was a big thing as well. Particularly from the fox walking exercise, and again it ties in with that perspective thing, the widening of perceptions. I've been more focused, I notice I'm normally all over the place shooting off in 200 different directions and not sticking with just one thing. That is something that seems to have changed, definitely for the better.

C35: That is my next challenge. I am trying to set myself challenges. That's the thing that is a positive, because there were things that I did in the workshop that I was afraid of but did anyway. I've sort of taken that through into my life beyond that, and I have been trying things that I normally run a mile from.

R28: What do you feel has changed that has allowed you to do those things?

C36: I'm so used to saying I can't do something and then not doing it because I don't want to be proved right, particularly in front of other people. To do exercises despite having those doubts, and to actually successfully complete the exercises with other people watching, made me think well actually if I can do it then I can do it in other areas of my life.

R30: So there has been a change in perspective, focus, and confidence. Anything else?

C38: ... One of the exercises made that clear for me quite strongly and made me realise that if I want help I've got to ask for it. Sometimes you have to make yourself vulnerable in order to get you want. You literally have to stick your neck out.

R33: Have you made any other changes since the workshop?

C41: I've started meditating because I found the guided meditations and the sit-spots were a really good way of quietening my mind and relaxing. ... The guided meditations and sit-spots were very helpful in stilling my mind, and I've combined a few of the things that we learned on the workshop.

R35: Any other changes?

C43: ... My GP said comeback for another blood pressure test, I will have to put you on the drugs next time if it hasn't changed. So I went back about 2 to 3 weeks after the workshop and no one was more surprised than me that my blood pressure was back to normal. I know it wasn't an experiment conducted in the lab but the only thing that changed was my was my relaxing and using what I had learned in the workshop and applying that. There was no other medications or even any herbal medication.

How are you feeling about yourself?

C47: ...There was one exercise the 'Find a Tree Like Me' exercise that in a nutshell taught me compassion towards myself in a very powerful emotional way. It was one of the most moving experiences I've ever had. Again it was like making a connection to another living thing. The only difference was that it was a giant plant. I felt a huge compassion towards the tree, but really it was compassion towards myself. Which is something I've never allowed myself. I became more forgiving of the flaws within myself. In a way that exercise turned everything on its head, the empathy I was extending towards the trees flaws, literally was actually being extended towards myself. It was one of those Eureka moments when I realised the compassion for the trees flaws were actually compassion for my own flaws...and my strengths. I acknowledged my flaws and the rocky start I had, and was also able to see that I've got strengths. I can still flourish despite the damage, and not just flourish but serve a useful purpose.

C48: Again the exercise made me acknowledge my strengths. Which is my persistence and the fact that I am actually a survivor because I have weathered a lot of storms. Perhaps a lot of other people, or trees might have toppled, but I am still here.

(discussing what she had listed on the change form)

R59: Tolerance of your flaws, how expected or surprised were you by that change?

C79: I don't know what expectations I had. I really thought that anger was just the end result of a whole lot of other things put together. I wouldn't have expected it to change much, it was so deep-seated. That was a big surprise.

C91: ... One of the things I've learned was from the perception exercises was that I learned about perspective. That you are less likely to see the negative if you can see the wider picture. If you see the wider picture you're also more likely to see the positives. I still see negative stuff but it's not the same extent as it was before.

R69: I give up very easily: how would you rate that one?

C93: ...Largely because of things like the Rope Walk and Fox Walk exercise. That was quite a revelation. Not falling over. They were physical things that I would normally have given up on because of my Menieres disease, which causes bad balance. I've convinced myself that I couldn't possibly have done anything blindfolded. I couldn't possibly have done the Fox Walking without looking at my feet. But I did both those exercises, one blindfolded (Rope Walk) where I wasn't looking at my feet, and on neither occasion did I fall over. So I thought of the metaphor for life staying focused on where you are going and you're less likely to lose your footing and fall on your ass.

C93: ...And that's okay in a wider sense, so it carried through into situations my life. Into a more strategic way of dealing with life and how I approach problems and not giving up on things.

C93: ... In both those exercises I told you I couldn't do them, and I was convinced that I couldn't do them. I would normally not even have tried them. That is a pattern that is common in my life and how I have approached other problems. I see a challenge and I run a mile from it, saying I can't do that. I'm going to fall on my ass and people are going to laugh at me.

C93: ... I really surprised myself, particularly with the Fox walk, just by changing my focus instead of focusing on my feet, I focused on where I was going. Like a cat focused on the prey, on their objective, and the body just seemed to follow, and that really seemed to surprise me. When my body just seemed to follow without me having to concentrate on it.

C93: I have always paid attention to the minutiae and all the obstacles. I'm always thinking about where the obstacles are, and how I might fall here, and how I might fall there. Whereas I just focused on where I wanted to go and focused on that. It was like my feet just naturally found their way. So there was no falling over, and I didn't even have to think about my feet. And that's a metaphor for life if you just look where you're going.

R88: You mentioned find a tree to tree like me.

C115: It's one of those eureka moments, and you just think actually I'm ascribing all that to a tree but actually it is me that I'm talking about. Yeah, I have weathered a lot of storms and had a bit of damage, and may not be the prettiest tree in the forest but I realised I am resilient. That made me think, that I was good and that contributed to my self-worth. That made me feel my worth was better. Because I am worth more because I am surviving. It is an attribute or quality that I have.

R89: Is that a change in your thinking is, have you integrated that, is something you feel or is something you're thinking about at the moment?

C116: It is something that I've taken into my everyday life, when I looked at that tree I was able to see its flaws and strengths as well, and I just thought that was really just what I'm seeing within myself. It is a metaphor from me. I've been more forgiving of myself, I'm able to look at myself now and see that yes I do have flaws, but despite those flaws, I still have good qualities. There are things about me that are good. I am worth something. I could see from that tree that it was protecting things that were growing at its feet. It was providing shelter from birds that lived in it and fed off it. And even for us when we sat under it when it rained. It is providing a supporting role as it were. It is very important and I thought that is me as well I provide a supporting role. Even if it is not the leading roles, it is still a supporting role and is still important.

R90: So did the exercise make you more aware of your strengths?

C117: Yeah, it made me aware of not focusing on the negatives. Because previously I would have only seen the negatives within myself. Just the flaws and that exercise made me realise that that nothing is all flawed and that everything has some strengths. Even me. So I was less judgemental about myself.

R120: Any other reason for you pushing yourself into that job?

C150: It was a case that I had done things in the workshop that I didn't think I was capable of, and I thought they would end in disaster. I was afraid of doing this gig, and I just thought well I might fall on my ass, but then again I might not, try to focus on what might go right, instead of what I normally do, which is focus on all the millions of things that might go wrong.

R121: So thinking about the helpful aspects of the therapy, can you sum up what was helpful about the workshop or the exercises that you did?

C152: To summarise some of the things I've already said, perspective and keeping things in proportion was a really big one.

C152: Learning that it's okay to be noticed and in fact you have to make yourself noticed in order to get what you want, to get attention. You have to make yourself noticed in order to make

yourself succeed in anything. Like the little woodpecker in that exercise who stuck his head out and called out for what it wanted. And I thought that is something I've never done.

C152: Focusing on where you want to be instead of up close. Again that keeps things in perspective, instead of focusing on great big obstacles. You focus on the path and the destination, instead of the obstacles. You can be more inventive about how to get past the obstacle if you know that there is something beyond the obstacle. So its perception and focus, and not being defeated, and not avoiding things. Learning to tackle things that you believe you can't do.

C152: Challenging beliefs was a big thing of the workshop because of the things I was 100% convinced that I couldn't do, and I did them.

C152: Learning it is okay to be flawed, and you can still be great even though you are broken.

R128: So the environment itself certainly plays a part in some of the exercises?

C159: ... You still get that therapeutic effect of relaxation when you walk in the countryside. But it would never have occurred to me to naturally make those connections to my problems or to look at the tree and seeing it as myself or to actually use what was around me and apply to my own life.

C159: ...However I can get therapy from the nice effect of a walk in the country but it wouldn't have stayed with me. If you have a nice picture of a wood on your wall you can look at and think that's nice but it wouldn't have the same effect. In order to be powerful it needed to be directed. I just needed someone to point out that it can be a metaphor. I wouldn't have known otherwise.

C161: The environment put me into receptive state of mind so the exercises were more powerful. Also when you've got something real in front of you like a tree, it's better than just a worksheet on a table.

C161: ...It was the experiential element that made it more powerful. When I read self-help books my brain just turns off. Just going out and doing things and being shown things practically has really helped.

### **Unhelpful Therapy Processes**

R133: There were a couple of exercises that you did not participate in that involved the blindfold. How do you feel about those now?

C165: I feel a bit disappointed that I didn't do them. I was kicking myself and feeling guilty for not doing them. But I was too scared of falling over. I think if I had done the Rope Walk exercise first I might have been more inclined to do the other ones. The Rope Walk was arguably easier. I was glad I did at least one blindfolded exercise.

### **Difficult but Potentially Helpful Therapy Processes**

C166: I think "Find a Tree Like Me" actually had me quite tearful. It was painful because when I realised the tree was actually me, I felt sad for the tree. I'd get choked up now if I talked about. But yes that was painful because I was seeing myself with my flaws, and acknowledging the damage that was there in myself, and the fact it was on its own. It was very supportive of other life, the birds and animals and plants around it. It was in a supporting role, but it was all on its

own. And there weren't even any baby beech trees underneath it. Even though there were lots of beech seeds. And I thought, yes, that's me. So moving on..... That was the most difficult one but it was also the most transformative one. No pain no gain. You have to challenge yourself and push yourself outside of your comfort zone otherwise you just stagnate.

### **Incomplete Aspects of Therapy**

The participant stated in her follow-up interview that she considered several of the changes as "works in progress" suggesting that she hadn't reached a complete resolution of some of the problems.

C21: I'm a work in progress I'd say.

C82: Still very high. It's a work in progress.

C96: That is a tough one. My brain is always going off in different directions. I don't want to disappoint you but I can't really see much change in that one yet. A work in progress.

C113: That is a work in progress. It's better than it was. I think.

### **Helpful and Hindering Factors in Client's Life Situation**

Since the workshop, the participant has started meditation classes (C41) in her local Buddhist centre and has been attending the classes weekly. She says she has combined the awareness and meditation exercises from the workshop with what she is learning at the Buddhist centre.

### **Client's Personal Strengths (Motivation to Change)**

C17: No I don't think there is anything else, except the determination that I brought to the workshop to make a change.

C21: A helper I suppose. Previously I'd say doormat but now I would say helper. I have strong communication skills. I help people largely through communication.

### **Helpful and Unhelpful Aspects of Participating in the Research**

C178: It was just a very positive experience. I say experience because it was the experiential nature of it that made it work more than something that was just theory or sitting in a class room. Because it was in a different environment that made it impact more as well. The fact that it wasn't in a therapy room. The fact that it was something that was radically different. It was unusual, embracing and natural. How many people head out to the countryside in droves? You feel better, it is restorative.



## Appendix 2: Affirmative and Sceptic Briefs and Rebuttals

### Section 1: Affirmative Brief

#### *Positive Evidence*

The purpose of this analysis is to answer the following two questions:

1. Did the participant change substantially during the workshop?
2. Did the Nature-Awareness exercises used in the workshop contributed substantially to those changes?

It is my conclusion that the participant did change considerably over the course of the workshop and that the exercises within the workshop contributed to those changes. I can find no other major factors which contributed to or caused the participant's changes.

There are a number of types of evidence which can be used to support these conclusions. The types of evidence are (Elliott, 2002):

#### *1. Retrospective attribution*

In post therapy interviews the client explicitly states that changes were the result of therapy. This attribution can be a general statement, or specific.

#### *2. Process-outcome mapping*

The content of post therapy changes can be linked to specific events, processes or events in therapy.

#### *3. Within therapy process-outcome correlation*

Specific interventions that are implemented by the therapist (e.g. evidence on therapist notes), or specific therapy events (e.g. evidence from HAT), are linked to client change.

#### *4. Changes in stable problems*

The client has had a long-standing problem and change is observed soon after therapy commences.

#### *5. Event-shift sequences*

Links between gains in clients PQ scores and significant within therapy events.

For this affirmative case to be plausible and robust, the causal inference provided by direct evidence must be demonstrated in at least two of these five types of evidence.

Due to the fact that a workshop rather than a sessional format was used, the Event-shift sequences evidence type was not used. It would be impossible to link individual in-therapy events to PQ changes because all the exercises took place between the first and second PQ ratings.

*1. Retrospective Attribution: client attributes therapy as being the primary cause of their changes*

Amy has clearly stated in her follow up interview that she attributes the changes she made directly to the exercises she did during the workshop. Amy also retrospectively attributed seven out of the eight changes she lists as being unlikely to have come about without therapy. In the table below (A1.8) are the changes the participant states she made, and her comments from the follow up Change Interview that attribute that change to specific exercises and other aspects of the workshop.

Table A1.8: Evidence from the change interview that supports the participants stated changes.

Change	Evidence of attribution of the change to the exercises (From the Change Interview)
Perspective	<p>C19: ...A lot of the insights that came from doing some of the exercises were fairly profound actually. There were some exercises that was so emotionally moving, one in particular, that it made a permanent shift in the way that I looked at myself, definitely, and also altering my perspective of how I look at my problems, and how I approach my life. I think because some of them were so powerful that they stuck with me in a way that a year of counselling hadn't done.</p> <p>C20: Yeah definitely I think the perspective is that the one I keep coming back to. There were a few of the exercises that we did that raised that issue, or I suppose my subconscious raise the issue and the environment give me answers. It has really helped not to get things out of proportion, it was a big part of what drew me to the workshop.</p> <p>C30: ...In the sensory expansion exercise, it gave me the idea of perspective and widening one's perceptions gives you a wider picture.</p> <p>C98: It was the sensory expansion thing, literally it was like having a wide-angle lens on. Whereas before I had a macro lens on my entire life and suddenly with a wide-angle lens on I was able to see everything and sharp focus.</p> <p>C103: ...I tried deep breathing to slow my mind down and then deliberately applied the idea of lets keep this in perspective.</p> <p>C152: To summarise some of the things I've already said, perspective and keeping things in proportion was a really big one. Learning that it's okay to be noticed and in fact you have to make yourself noticed in order to get what you want, to get attention. You have to make yourself noticed in order to make yourself succeed in anything. Like the little woodpecker in that exercise who stuck his head out and called out for what they wanted. And I thought that something I've never done.</p> <p>C153: ...I think I could never have learned about perspective in a small room. So being in the landscape brought that back home literally and metaphorically. You're sitting at the side of a hill looking out over a huge valley at a mountain, with endless sky above you. It rather gives you a literal interpretation of perspective, you are aware that you are part of a much much bigger thing, and you are small but not inconsequential, and you are aware that you are connected to everything.</p>
Focus	<p>C31: Focus was a big thing as well. Particularly from the fox walking exercise, and again it ties in with that perspective thing, the widening of perceptions.</p> <p>C2: ...Sharing my fears and innermost feelings in front of a group of other people was simultaneously quite nerve racking but liberating at the same time. ...So it was good to work on it, from that perspective it was a big bugbear of mine. So being in the focus of attention was therapy in itself.</p> <p>C93: Oh it has improved, it has always been my first course of action, was always avoidance. Largely because of things like the Rope Walk and Fox Walk that was quite a revelation. Not falling over, they were physical things that I would normally given up on because of my menieres and bad balance. I've convinced myself that I couldn't possibly have done anything</p>

	<p>blindfolded. I couldn't possibly have done the Fox walking without looking at my feet. But I did both those exercises, one blindfolded, where I wasn't looking at my feet and on neither occasion did I fall over. So I thought of the metaphor for life staying focused on where you are going and you're less likely to lose your footing and fall on your ass.</p> <p>C93: ...I really surprised myself, particularly with the Fox walk, just by changing my focus instead of focusing on my feet, I focused on where I was going. Like a cat focused on the prey, on their objective, and the body just seems to follow, and that really seemed to surprise me, that when my body just seemed to follow, without me having to concentrate on it. I always pay attention to the minutiae and all the obstacles and problems. I'm always thinking about where the obstacles are and how I might fall here and how I might fall there. Whereas I just focused on where I wanted to go, and focused on that, it was like my feet just naturally found their way, so there was no falling over, and I didn't even have to think about my feet. And that's a metaphor for life if you just look where you're going.</p> <p>C109: ...Yes I made it a several step plan. If I only take one step I see that as a positive step. And try to stay focused on what I'm going for. Like that exercise we are focusing on the goal.</p>
Improved Self Worth	<p>C47: ...There was one exercise the 'find a tree like me' exercise that in a nutshell taught me compassion towards myself in a very powerful emotional way. It was one of the most moving experiences I've ever had. Again it was like making a connection to another living thing. The only difference was that it was a giant plant. I felt a huge compassion towards the tree, but really it was compassion towards myself. Which is something I've never allowed myself. I became more forgiving of the flaws within myself. In a way that exercise turned everything on its head, the empathy I extended to the trees flaws literally was actually being extended towards myself. It was one of those eureka moments when I realised the compassion for the trees flaws were actually compassion for my own flaws, and my strengths. I acknowledged my flaws and the rocky start I had, and also to see strengths that I've got, I can still flourish despite the damage, and not just flourish but serve a useful purpose.</p> <p>C113: That is a work in progress. It's better than it was. I think. And the Find a Tree Like Me exercise, well all of them actually, challenging myself and meeting that challenge, makes me feel better about myself.</p> <p>C115: ...But forcing myself to look at the tree and seeing its positive things and to feeling compassion for it. The damage on it and thinking well it's actually done pretty well for itself despite the fact that it's all smashed up and burned by lightning, and all fragmented all over the place. But it is still managing to survive and to thrive, and I just thought it was really me that I was describing. It's one of those eureka moments, and you just think actually I'm ascribing all that to a tree but actually it is me that I'm talking about. Yeah, I have weathered a lot of storms and had a bit of damage, and may not be the prettiest tree in the forest but I realised I am resilient. That made me think, that I was good and that contributed to my self-worth. That made me feel my worth was better. Because I am worth more because I am surviving. It is an attribute or quality that I have.</p>
Improved Relaxation	<p>C126: The sit spots was good for relaxation. I am going to meditation classes now, just once a week as well. I tried to do at least a 10 minute meditation at home. So that is a big difference for me is.</p> <p>C127: The guided meditation and the sit spots were very good for relaxation because it taught me to quieten my mind and sit still and shut up.</p> <p>C129: ...I am trying to do meditation every day myself, based on the guided meditation techniques that we did on the workshop. The guided meditation</p>

	<p>techniques that we did on the workshop are different to what we do at the Buddhist centre. So I try to remember what I can from the guided meditation and do that myself.</p> <p>C119: ...So I think the sound meditation, was good for the breathing, and the relaxation is good for relaxing the body. I have less problem getting to sleep now. It is staying asleep that is the main problem now.</p>
Reduced Blood Pressure	<p>C44: Well they all reduced my stress, and I'm sure it was the stress that was causing the hypertension, so when I applied what I've learned in the exercises to my life, my anxiety levels went down.</p> <p>C133: Well I'm not taking any medication. He was going to give me medication. He said come back and if it has gone up again then he was going to give me medication. But when I went back after the workshop it was normal so he said there was no need for the medication.</p> <p>R105: What do you feel has lowered your Blood Pressure? C134: The relaxation and meditation. C135: The whole change in attitude as well. It doesn't take a genius to work out that stress contributes to high blood pressure. So if I am not as stressed or angry then it must have an effect on my blood pressure. The stressors are still there but my reaction to them has changed.</p> <p>C43: ...The meditation exercises that we've learned, I carried through into my life, when I came home. I forced myself to stop and sit and relax and do a read of meditation. Just to calm my mind and my body seemed to follow. I didn't take any medication...I know it wasn't an experiment conducted in the lab but the only thing that changed was my was my relaxing and using what I had learned in the workshop and applying that.</p>
Improved Sleep	<p>C119: ...So I combine that with the guided meditation where we have to think about relaxing the muscles in the body. So I do that every night now and try to relax every muscle. So I think the sound meditation, was good for the breathing, and the relaxation is good for relaxing the body. I have less problem getting to sleep now.</p> <p>C137: I'm doing the relaxation thing. I do those in bed. It just calms me down. Normally I go to bed and my mind is racing and my heart is pounding.</p> <p>C139: I don't seem to be having quite as many nightmares and anxiety dreams as I used to. I've actually had some positive dreams.</p>
Reduced Alcohol Consumption	<p>C142: Dropped a lot. Pleased with that. It has been a major crutch for a long long time. Far too long. Dropped down as I didn't feel I needed it as much. I was drinking for all the wrong reason. You drink because you want to feel relaxed. I was finding that I can feel relaxed by doing relaxation exercises and having a cup of tea instead.</p>
Greater Tolerance of Own Flaws	<p>C47: ...There was one exercise the 'find a tree like me' exercise that in a nutshell taught me compassion towards myself in a very powerful emotional way. It was one of the most moving experiences I've ever had. Again it was like making a connection to another living thing. The only difference was that it was a giant plant. I felt a huge compassion towards the tree, but really it was compassion towards myself. Which is something I've never allowed myself. I became more forgiving of the flaws within myself. In a way that exercise turned everything on its head, the empathy I extended to the trees flaws literally was actually being extended towards myself. It was one of those eureka moments when I realised the compassion for the trees flaws were actually compassion for my own flaws, and my strengths. I acknowledged my flaws and the rocky start I had, and also to see strengths that I've got, I can still flourish despite the damage, and not just flourish but</p>

	<p>serve a useful purpose.</p> <p>C116: It is something that I've taken into my everyday life, when I looked at that tree I was able to see its flaws and strengths as well, and I just thought that was really just what I'm seeing within myself. It is a metaphor from me. I've been more forgiving of myself, I'm able to look at myself now and see that yes I do have flaws, but despite those flaws, I still have good qualities. There are things about me that are good. I am worth something. I could see from that tree that it was protecting things that were growing at its feet. It was providing shelter from birds that lived in it and fed off it. And even for us when we sat under it when it rained. It is providing a supporting role as it were. It is very important and I thought that is me as well I provide a supporting role. Even if it is not the leading roles, it is still a supporting role and is still important.</p> <p>C117: ...Because previously I would have only seen the negatives within myself. Just the flaws and that exercise made me realise that nothing is all flawed and that everything has some strengths. Even me. So I was less judgemental about myself</p>
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*2. Process to Outcome Mapping: Content of the post-workshop qualitative or quantitative changes plausibly matches specific events, aspects, or processes within therapy*

Process to outcome mapping refers to correspondence between specific events during the workshop and overall changes experienced by the participant as a result of workshop.

Table A1.9: Linking evidence of change from the follow-up interview and events from the HAT forms that support the participants stated changes.

<b>Outcome (Changes described at the follow-up interview)</b>	<b>Exercise Name (Descriptions from HAT Forms)</b>
<p><u>Perspective</u></p> <p>C91:” ... One of the things I've learned was from the perception exercises was that I learned about perspective. That you are less likely to see the negative if you can see the wider picture. If you see the wider picture you're also more likely to see the positives. I still see negative stuff but it's not the same extent as it was before.”</p> <p>C19: “... There were some exercises that was so emotionally moving, one in particular, that it made a permanent shift in the way that I looked at myself definitely, and also altering my perspective of how I look at my problems, and how I approach my life.”</p>	<p>Expanded Awareness : Hat Form 1, Question 2</p> <p>It was a clear metaphor for how looking at the wider picture helps "dilute" obsessional thoughts about negative things, and allows you to be aware of other things which in turn give you better sense of perspective about problems in your life. For me, the lesson was that I should try focusing my attention on my objectives and goals, rather than obstacles in my path. (Helpfulness: 9)</p> <p>Expanded Awareness : Hat Form 1, Question 7b</p> <p>During the expanded awareness exercise it started to rain heavily. This could have been a hindrance, but we were encouraged to incorporate the rain fall into the exercise-to notice the sound it made, to feel it on our skin, to smell the difference in the leaves and the earth as it became wet, to see the leaves bouncing as the raindrops hit them. It turned what could have been an unpleasant experience into an adventure of the senses-lesson being that often a negative expectations of things can be wrong, and events which we assume will be difficult can actually turn out to be the opposite-very enjoyable.</p>

<p>C20: “Yeah definitely I think the perspective is that the one I keep coming back to. There were a few of the exercises that we did that raised that issue”</p> <p>C30: “I’d say the perspective is a big one for me, it cropped up in a number of the exercises.”</p> <p>C30: “...In the sensory expansion exercise, it gave me the idea of perspective and widening one’s perceptions gives you a wider picture. Instead of focusing on the small things you see the bigger picture and that itself is very helpful because you are then not focusing on just the negatives”</p>	<p>Again, it is about changing one's perception. What many people might assume to be not very nice was actually a lot of fun!</p> <p>Sit Spot(Sunday Morning) : HAT Form 6, Question 2 Whilst listening to the woodland I heard a small sound which I could not identify. Following it to a hole in a tree I saw a baby woodpecker poke its head out and make the sound. It's small voice carried a surprisingly long way and shortly thereafter a parent woodpecker arrived with food.</p> <p>Sit Spot(Sunday Morning) : HAT Form 6, Question 6b ...This was a metaphor to me, saying that you have to stick your head out of your shelter and call out clearly, to make yourself noticed, and state clearly what you want. If you hide in the tree, no one will know you are there or that you need something. You have to speak up. (Helpfulness: 9)</p> <p>Rope Walk: HAT Form 7, Question 2 Any situations which involve losing my balance are always frightening for me, and therefore something I avoid at all costs, so for me to successfully complete this challenge was a major achievement for me, and I felt very proud of myself. (Helpfulness: 8)</p> <p>Fox Walk: HAT Form 3, Question 2 It was a huge surprise to me to find that I could use my other senses to keep my balance and maintain my direction. (Helpfulness: 9)</p> <p>Fox Walk: HAT Form 3, Question 7b Also, when if I do encounter a challenge, my myopic and low viewpoint makes the problem/obstacle fill my whole field of vision, making the problem appear larger than it really is, and therefore more frightening and insurmountable. (Helpfulness: 9)</p>
<p><u>Focus</u></p> <p>C31: “Focus was a big thing as well. Particularly from the fox walking exercise, and again it ties in with that perspective thing, the widening of perceptions. I've been more focused, I notice I'm normally all over the place shooting off in 200 different directions and not sticking with just one thing. That is something that seems to have changed, definitely for the better. “</p> <p>C117: “Yeah, it made me aware of not focusing on the negatives. Because previously I would have only seen the negatives within myself. “</p>	<p>Fox Walk: HAT Form 3, Question 2 I find that if I behaved like a cat and focused my attention on where I wanted to be, rather than looking at my feet, close-up, I became far more steady. The ultimate lesson I learned was that I spend so much time and effort dwelling on perceived obstacles and disabilities in my life that I am blind to the bigger picture. I spend all my time worrying about where I'm stepping so to speak, gazing at my feet, that I lose sight of where I want to be. (Helpfulness: 9)</p> <p>Fox Walk: HAT Form 3, Question 2 This exercise is a bit like my experience cycling. If I see an obstacle ahead, then concentrate on it I nearly always end up cycling straight into it, whereas if I look ahead at where I want to be, I usually avoid the obstacle and cycle safely to my goal. (Helpfulness: 9)</p> <p>Tracking Intentions: HAT Form 4, Question 2 The tracking exercise was especially helpful in that it taught me to pay attention to detail, as well as patience. I found it hard to spot signs in the sandy ground, but the exercise taught me to persevere and look more closely.</p>

	(Helpfulness: 6)
<p><u>Improved Self Worth</u></p> <p>C47: "... There was one exercise the 'find a tree like me' exercise that in a nutshell taught me compassion towards myself in a very powerful emotional way. It was one of the most moving experiences I've ever had. Again it was like making a connection to another living thing. The only difference was that it was a giant plant. I felt a huge compassion towards the tree, but really it was compassion towards myself."</p> <p>C115: "...But it is still managing to survive and to thrive, and I just thought it was really me that I was describing. It's one of those eureka moments, and you just think actually I'm ascribing all that to a tree but actually it is me that I'm talking about. Yeah, I have weathered a lot of storms and had a bit of damage, and may not be the prettiest tree in the forest but I realised I am resilient. That made me think, that I was good and that contributed to my self-worth."</p> <p>C81: "Considerably. A little bit more compassion for myself"</p>	<p>Find a Tree Like Me: HAT Form 8, Question 2 Similarly the metaphor device of the tree also helped me see some of my strengths, such as looking after the needs of others and providing support for them. In a positive sense, this interpretation of the tree helped me realise that, despite being past my prime, and no longer attractive, I still have the ability to be useful and even to flourish. (Helpfulness: 9)</p> <p>Find a Tree Like Me: HAT Form 8, Question 6b The compassion I felt for the tree was, in effect, compassion for myself, and this was an immensely moving experience because I am the last person in the world I have compassion for. (Helpfulness: 9)</p> <p>Fox Walk: HAT Form 3, Question 7b I was hindered at first by my own doubts and anxieties about how well I would be able to perform this task, based on concerns about my balance difficulties. The fact that I completed the exercise easily and fluently make me feel literally euphoric. I had triumphed over both mental and physical adversity and been really surprised and made me happy by my success. (Helpfulness: 9)</p> <p>Sit Spot(Saturday Evening): HAT Form 5, Question 6b This showed me that I had blended in with my surroundings nicely and reinforced my rather snugly comforting feeling that I was a natural part of the landscape and belonged there. I don't normally fit in anywhere and stand out like a sore thumb, so that was a nice feeling to belong. (Helpfulness: 8)</p> <p>Rope-Walk: HAT Form 7, Question 2 Any situations which involve losing my balance are always frightening for me, and therefore something I avoid at all costs, so for me to successfully complete this challenge was a major achievement for me, and I felt very proud of myself...</p> <p>Rope-Walk: HAT Form 7, Question 6b The fact that I completed this exercise by myself without any practical help was immensely significant to me. (Helpfulness: 8)</p> <p>Sit-Spot(Saturday Evening): HAT Form 5, Question 2 I felt like I was completely part of the landscape, rather than a visitor. I felt included. (Helpfulness: 7.5)</p>
<p><u>Improved Relaxation</u></p> <p>C142: "... I was finding that I can feel relaxed by doing relaxation exercises and having a cup of tea instead. "</p> <p>C67: "...It has been extremely helpful to me."</p> <p>C89:"I use more humour and relaxation. Because of that the anger has dropped."</p> <p>C126: "The sit spots was good for</p>	<p>Expanded Awareness: Hat Form 1, Question 6b When during the expanded awareness exercise, we were compelled to stop, to relax and give into our senses. This gave me a valuable lesson about how much I miss in life simply because I am always rushing around-both literally and in my thoughts. Again, taking time to slow things down and take note of my surroundings makes me aware of things around me which are beautiful and can be helpful and therapeutic. (Helpfulness: 9)</p> <p>Sit-Spot(Saturday Morning): HAT Form 2, Question 2 I felt comfortable and protected sitting in the trees centre, but find it very</p>



<p>relaxation.”</p>	<p>hard to get all my thoughts out of my mind and to sit still. My attention wandering off, but it was good to be forced into slowing myself down. (Helpfulness: 7)</p> <p>Sit-Spot(Saturday Morning): HAT Form 2, Question 6b When I eventually stopped fidgeting and sat still, a Robin flew down and sat on a branch in front of me. If I had still been moving about, he probably wouldn't have come so close. It sort of illustrated that sometimes you have to stop running around or else all your flapping and shouting frightens people away. If you are quiet and calm you are more likely to attract people to you because you are literally more approachable. (Helpfulness: 6)</p>
<p><u>Reduced Blood Pressure</u></p> <p>C134: “The relaxation and meditation.” C135: “The whole change in attitude as well. It doesn't take a genius to work out that stress contributes to high blood pressure so if I am not as stressed or angry then it must have an effect on my blood pressure. The stressors are still there but my reaction to them has changed.”</p>	<p>See Perspective, Focus and Improved Relaxation</p>
<p><u>Improved Sleep</u></p> <p>C119: “... I have less of a problem getting to sleep now. It is staying asleep that is the main problem now.”</p>	<p>See Improved Relaxation</p>
<p><u>Reduced Alcohol Consumption</u></p> <p>C142: “Dropped a lot. Pleased with that. It has been a major crutch for a long long time. Far too long. Dropped down as I didn't feel I needed it as much. I was drinking for all the wrong reason. You drink because you want to feel relaxed.”</p>	<p>See Perspective, Focus and Improved Relaxation</p>
<p><u>Greater Tolerance of Own Flaws</u></p> <p>C47: “...It was one of those Eureka moments when I realised the compassion for the trees flaws were actually compassion for my own flaws, and my strengths. I acknowledge my flaws and the rocky start I had, and also to see that I've got strengths. I can still flourish despite despite the damage, and not just flourish but serve a useful purpose.”</p> <p>C118: “No, I think that was a moving exercise for me. I made such a deep connection with the tree in effect what I was feeling in effect was compassion for myself. I was forgiving myself for not being perfect.”</p>	<p>Find a Tree Like Me: HAT Form 8, Question 2 I think even more than anything, my compassion for the damaged tree helped me recognise and acknowledge areas of my life and personality which have previously been buried or are in need of repair. This was powerful because I am generally not very forgiving of flaws in myself, so the detachment of pretending I was talking about a tree was quite liberating.</p> <p>Find a Tree Like Me: HAT Form 8, Question 2 Similarly the metaphor device of the tree also helped me see some of my strengths, such as looking after the needs of others and providing support for them. In a positive sense, this interpretation of the tree helped me realise that, despite being past my prime, and no longer attractive, I still have the ability to be useful and even to flourish. (Helpfulness: 9)</p> <p>Sit Spot(Sunday Morning): HAT Form 6, Question 2 At first I was disappointed not to be able to hear many sounds, I could hear</p>

C144: "...I'm not so critical of myself. I'm a bit more compassionate towards myself. I've always been compassionate towards other people but I thought well I'll turn it back on myself."

C117: "Yeah, it made me aware of not focusing on the negatives. Because previously I would have only seen the negatives within myself. Just the flaws and that exercise made me realise that that nothing is all flawed and that everything has some strengths. Even me. So I was less judgemental about myself"

only one bird. Then, just as I was getting frustrated, more birds arrived, until they were all around me. This taught me that sometimes we need to be patient. To sit quietly and just wait for the things we want to come to us. - Listening helps me not to miss the smaller things in life, whilst jumping up and down and complaining and giving up drives away things which might have been positive for me.

(Helpfulness: 9)

Sit Spot(Sunday Morning): HAT Form 6, Question 2

Whilst listening to the woodland I heard a small sound which I could not identify. Following it to a hole in a tree I saw a baby woodpecker poke its head out and make the sound. It's small voice carried a surprisingly long way and shortly thereafter a parent woodpecker arrived with food. ...This was a metaphor to me, saying that you have to stick your head out of your shelter and call out clearly, to make yourself noticed, and state clearly what you want. If you hide in the tree, no one will know you are there or that you need something. You have to speak up.

(Helpfulness: 9)

Tracking Intentions: HAT Form 4, Question 2

I found it hard to spot signs in the sandy ground, but the exercise taught me to persevere and look more closely.

(Helpfulness: 6)

### *3. Within Therapy Process-Outcome Correlation*

See Table A1.3: Helpful Aspects of Therapy. (see Appendix 1, Section 5)

### *4. Changes in Stable Problems*

All of the problems identified by Amy (see Table A1.5) are long-standing stable problems of at least six years in duration.

Amy's quantitative results indicate she has achieved positive change with all but two of the problems that she had identified at the beginning of the study. This could be taken as an indication that the participant had made considerable changes some of them significant. From the change interview the participant reported that these changes were unlikely to have occurred without therapy.

Amy identified 10 problems that she wished to address over the course of the weekend. All but two of them had reduced by the time of the follow-up change interview. One of these "I lack direction" was rated as no change, however in her change interview the participant states quite clearly that she has put her work forward for an exhibition and managed to get some of her photographs on display in a local cafe. She states that this is something that she would not have

done before. This may indicate not just a change in focus and self-belief, but also direction.

The participants mean PQ score at the beginning of the workshop was 6.3, and her mean score at the follow up interview 6 weeks later was 4.8, a drop of 1.5. This indicates that the long standing problems that were bothering her more than 'Very Considerably' at the beginning of the workshop, had dropped to just under 'Considerably' by the time of her 6 week follow up interview.

All the outcome measures showed a drop between the initial measurement taken before the workshop and the final measurement taken at the follow-up interview 6 weeks later.

Her HAM-A score dropped from 24, at the top of the Moderate range, to 18 which is the clinical caseness cut-off level. This improvement in generalised anxiety was corroborated by a similar decrease on her GAD-7 score which dropped from 17, a Severe, to 11, a Moderate, and just 1 point above the clinical caseness cut-off level.

Her LSAS score dropped from 83, indicating Severe social phobia, dropping to 76, a Marked social phobia.

Her WSAS score was initially 25, which is regarded as a Moderately Severe psychopathology, and dropped to 21 by the follow up interview. Still within the Moderately Severe range but at the lower end of the range.

Comparison of Amy's GAD-7, HAM-A and LSAS scores all indicate an improvement in her generalised anxiety and social anxiety, and that the improvement has been maintained. Whilst the WSAS score is still in the moderately severe range, it does indicate an improvement in Amy's perception of her ability to cope with her day-to-day tasks.

### *Conclusion*

I considering these changes to be considerable given the fact that 6 of those changes are in stable problems that Amy has existed for over 10 years, with the remaining 4 problems having a duration of 6-10 years. In the change interview she indicates that the problems with a duration of greater than 10 years have been around for most of her life. Secondly I find the results all the more remarkable given both the short duration of the study, and given that the exercises were

part of a structured workshop which allowed less adjustment to each participant's needs than would occur if they were used in one-to-one therapy sessions.

## Section 2: The Sceptic Brief

The sceptic case is the development of a good-faith argument to cast doubt on the affirmative case that the client changed and that these changes are attributable to therapy. It does this by identifying flaws in the argument and presenting alternative explanations that could account for all or most of the change reported. Evidence is collected to support the eight possible non-therapy explanations below.

### *1 Apparent changes are trivial or irrelevant*

Apparent changes are simply down to relaxing, or the relaxing after effect of having spent time camping outdoors in a peaceful environment, separated from her daily stresses. She stated clearly in the follow up interview that she feels relaxed, at ease, tranquil and happy in the countryside and that the city where she lives depresses her.

“C5 ...there is something about the natural environment as well that made me feel more relaxed. I am more relaxed in the countryside anyway, there is something so tranquil and restful in the natural environment it makes me feel more at ease than I would in a more formal setting.”

“C9 ...I have been raised in the countryside, and I have been brought up with a strong connection with my environment, I feel happy in the natural environment. I have now spent more than 20 years in a built up environment, man-made. I find it very claustrophobic, and depressing, and unnatural.”

Amy's changes are largely intellectual in nature (C103). She has gained insight into what needs to change and how she needs to be thinking or behaving differently but is not necessarily demonstrating any of the changes in her day to day life.

### *2. Apparent changes are due to measurement or other statistical error*

There are not enough data collection points to make a judgement on just how substantial or lasting any of the changes that Amy has reported actually are. A second follow up interview at three months or six months would have help to indicate if the changes have persisted.

There may be some indication of an all-or-nothing thinking style. This may lead to the possibility of scoring problems as more severe and limiting than they are, and scoring helpful

aspects and benefits as being more helpful than they were. There is some evidence to suggest this, as five out of the nine helpfulness ratings on the Helpful Aspects of Therapy forms are rated at the extremely helpful levels of 8 or 9. Similarly on the initial PQ form she has rated nine out of ten of her initial problems as either a 6 or 7. This may have the effect of exaggerating both the helpfulness and the significance of change.

### *3. Apparent changes are due to relational factors (the client feeling appreciative of, or expressing their liking of the therapist or an attempt to please the therapist or researcher)*

There is some evidence that may suggest that Amy was attempting to please the therapist with her responses. During the follow up interview, whilst reviewing the “Lacking Direction” problem on her PQ form she responds with “C96: ...I don't want to disappoint you but I can't really see much change in that one yet.” She is stating clearly that disappointing the researcher is something she doesn't want to do.

Almost all but a few of her answers were very positive despite listing “I see the negatives first” on as a problem on her PQ form. Direct questions regarding what aspect of the workshop that she had found unhelpful had either very brief answers or no response at all, or were followed up with a positive statement.

For example:

“R130: Was there anything about the workshop or the exercises that were hindering, unhelpful, negative or disappointing for you?”

“C162: Erm.. No, not really.

The fact that it rained one day could have been interpreted as a hindrance but you've turned into something which got integrated into the expanded perception thing and that really worked well because we started listening to the sound of the rain on the leaves which turned out to be quite therapeutic rather nice. It could have been a hindrance but then it wasn't.”

“R131: Was anything that was disappointing?”

“C163: Nope nothing seems to come to mind at all.

I can't think of anything that was disappointing, well not in the exercises. In my own response to them in the beginning. My initial temper. But no I can't think of anything disappointing.”

### *4. Apparent changes are due to the client conforming to cultural or personal*

### *expectancies of change in therapy*

Amy occasionally used psychological terminology to describe her changes which may suggest she is basing her changes on what she expects to happen rather than what she is experiencing. At times her language can also be quite intellectual and she refers to some changes in quite a detached and general sense as if recalling something she has read in a book.

There are slight inconsistencies in her reporting of the changes, whilst the majority are very positive there are times where she contradicts herself.

Due to the use of psychological terminology, occasional use of detached intellectual descriptions, and some slight inconsistencies in the description of her changes, there is some evidence that may suggest that Amy is attributing at least some of her change to personal and cultural expectancy artefacts.

### *5. Improvement is due to resolution of a temporary state of distress or natural recovery*

It appears that Amy had reached a point in her life where she had had enough of her lifetime of crippling problems, and may have been at a natural recovery point. Perhaps a relaxing weekend away from her day to day worries may have been all she needed to realise what she needed to change her perspective. “C17 ...These issues have been holding me back pretty much all my entire life and I felt crippled by them. I thought it was time to do something about it. So I brought that determination to the workshop, but that is the only thing that I feel I have brought externally.”

The environment and group interactions may have contributed towards the changes rather than any specific natural-awareness exercises. This may be evident from her comments:

“C2: ...Sharing my fears and innermost feelings in front of a group of other people was simultaneously quite nerve racking but liberating at the same time.” where she feels that the relaxation from being in the environment helped her to relax enough to participate fully within the group. She does not make it clear whether the mentioned group participation occurred before or after any of the natural-awareness exercises.

Amy claims in C5 that she feels particularly comfortable in the countryside, and it may be that this level of comfort and relaxation combined with an exercise that focuses her on problems

contributed to the changes. It may not have been the natural-awareness exercises themselves that caused the change but simply by being relaxed while thinking about her problems.

“C5: ... Particularly as you're making yourself vulnerable, really you are talking about your innermost feelings and insecurities and that is something I generally feel uncomfortable with. There is something about the natural environment as well that made me feel more relaxed. “

#### *6. Improvement is due to extra-therapy factors (such as change in job or personal relationships etc.)*

Amy reports no changes relating to her job, her relationships, her medical care, or her lifestyle. With the exception of Amy starting a weekly meditation class at her local Buddhist centre (C126), after the workshop, I can find no obvious external factors that can explain the changes she claims to have made.

#### *7. Improvement is due to biological factors (such as medication or herbal remedies)*

Amy reported in the follow up interview that she had not changed any of her medication or herbal supplements. Her medication has been stable both throughout the period of research and for several months preceding the research. I have been unable to find any evidence to support Amy's improvement is due to biological factors.

#### *8. Improvement is due to effects of being in the research*

Amy appears to have enjoyed participating in the research, and seems eager to please. This may have skewed the responses and ratings. When asked how she would describe herself, Amy replies C21: “A helper...”, and her participation in the research could be interpreted as helping. If she feels she is helping then it's possible this may have acted as a temporary boost to her self-worth which may not necessarily translate into permanent change.

### **Section 3: Affirmative Rebuttal to Sceptic Case**

#### *1 Apparent changes are trivial or irrelevant*

Nature is an integral part of the nature-awareness exercises, and cannot be separated from them. Nature-awareness leverages several well researched concepts such as the 3 Way Therapeutic

Relationship (Berger & McLeod, 2006), Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan, 1995) as well as general relaxation as shown by numerous studies (Park et al, 2010). Through the 3 way therapeutic relationship, I believe nature acts as a co-therapist, as well as a second positive sponsor (Gilligan, 1997). The above concepts allowed Amy to be in a safe relaxed and receptive state of mind which allowed her to widen her perspective enough to perceive herself and her problems differently. As Amy herself says:

C161: *“The environment put me into a receptive state of mind so the exercises were more powerful.”*

Amy does mention that she that, yes, she does feel tranquil and happy and the ease in the countryside. But she clearly states in paragraph (C159) that whilst she felt that it was relaxing, it was the way that she was asked to think about a problem during the exercises, whilst in the natural environment that enabled her to gain new perspectives on her previous issues.

Whilst Amy does seem to describe things from an intellectual viewpoint, there is evidence in the way that she describes a problem that indicates a shift in understanding. There are also several examples that she gives which would indicate a change in her thoughts and behaviours and emotional responses in her daily life. For example Amy mentioned that other people have commented on her change, including her GP (C43), her husband (C176), and a friend (C106).

### Relevance to Contemporary Psychotherapy

Here is an example of how the nature-awareness exercises relates to one of the principles of contemporary psychotherapy by utilising Amy’s naturally occurring altered state of safety, relaxation and receptivity that came from being in the natural environment, and leveraging it to effect change (C161).

## *2. Apparent changes are due to measurement or other statistical error*

Due to time constraints relating to completion of this report, the researcher was unable to leave the follow-up interview any later than the six week period used in the study. An additional follow-up period of either a 3 or 6 months would have allowed confirmation that the changes had stabilised.

Whilst the longer term stability of Amy’s change cannot be determined from the limited number



of data collection points. It is clear that Amy considers herself to have changed for the better. All of Amy's outcome measures indicate an improvement and eight out of ten of her PQ scores show an improvement.

*3. Apparent changes are due to relational factors (the client feeling appreciative of, or expressing their liking of the therapist or an attempt to please the therapist or researcher).*

Whilst Amy may have been attempting to please the therapist's with her responses during the follow up interview, there is other evidence, both qualitative and quantitative that suggests she has made changes. At the very most her attempt to please may have simply exaggerated her responses during her interview.

*4. Apparent changes are due to the client conforming to cultural or personal expectancies of change in therapy*

Amy has experienced considerable therapy throughout her life (see Appendix 1 – Rich Case Record). She has also experienced several different types of therapy including transactional analysis, counselling, and CBT. Her familiarity with these therapies, some of which have taken place over a considerable amount of time may go some way to explaining her use of and familiarity with certain psychological terms within the interview. This may also described the somewhat intellectual and slightly detached way of describing things as she may have become used to having to think about her thoughts and emotions behaviours in a more detached sense as she describes them to the therapist.

*5. Improvement is due to resolution of a temporary state of distress or natural recovery*

Amy does mention that she brought a sense of determination to the workshop (C17) because of her lifetime of crippling problems. Whilst this may have given her the motivation to change, she does mention that this would not have been enough, and that it was the exercises that caused to look at her problems in a particular way.

C159: *“Yes, but I would never make those connections myself. You still get that therapeutic effect of relaxation when you walk in the countryside. But it would never have occurred to me to naturally make those connections to my problems or to look at the tree and seeing it as myself or to actually use what was around me and apply to my own life.”*

In response to the sceptic's statement that changes are simply due to a combination of group interaction and spending time relaxing in nature, see Table A1.9 for a list of some of Amy's comments where she talks about specific exercises contributing to her change.

In C159 she also states that:

*"... In order to be powerful it needed to be directed. I just needed someone to point out that it can be a metaphor. I wouldn't have known otherwise."*

In C153 she states that she didn't get much from the group, and that it was the exercises that helped:

*C153: "It wasn't that much from the group, there was contribution from the group but that wasn't paramount. It was the exercises themselves and the natural environment because you couldn't have one without the other."*

#### Relevance to Contemporary Psychotherapy

This is an illustration of another principle of contemporary psychotherapy that nature-awareness demonstrates, responding 'with time' to the person as they are now. Amy's determination to change combined with feeling in a more receptive state (C161) brought on by her being in a natural environment, gave her the undirected raw motivational energy and a mental state which was more open to change. What was missing was a direction to channel that energy. The nature-awareness exercises provided a way for Amy to explore, gain insight, and find her own way to channel and direct that energy in a way that allowed her to change herself.

#### *8. Improvement is due to effects of being in the research*

Amy may have been responding to the attention, however there are specific changes she has made, and things she has done differently since the workshop (C147, C150, C151, C43, C119, C124). External observers such as her GP (C43) and friends have also commented (C106). Her participation may have skewed the results but there is clear evidence both quantitative and qualitative to support that she did in fact make significant changes.

### **Section 4: Sceptic Rebuttal to Affirmative Rebuttal**

Throughout the interview Amy appeared to be eager to answer in a very positive way. Almost

all of her responses are very positive. Including answers to questions which were designed to elicit the problematic aspects of the therapy. It is still the sceptics opinion that this may have exaggerated the extent of her reported changes.

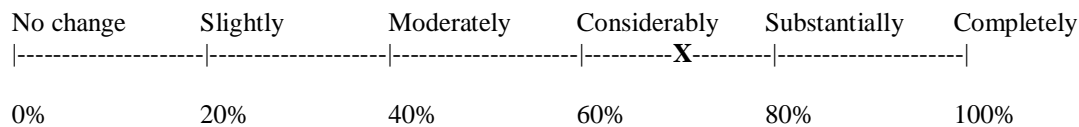
Amy's PQ scores were indeed lower at the end of the workshop, with many of the ratings rising slightly by the time of the 6 week follow-up interview. Whilst almost all of her final PQ scores were still below their original starting levels, there is no way to determine if they have stabilised at that level, or if they would continue to rise, indicating a reduction of Amy's reported changes.

In summary the sceptic view is that Amy did change, and that she gained considerable insight and new positive ways of thinking about herself, her anxieties and related issues. This seems to have had a positive knock on effect in terms of reduced blood pressure, better self-image and improved relaxation skills. However most of Amy's outcome measure still lie within the clinical range, and there is simply not enough evidence to confirm that any improvements made so far are stable.

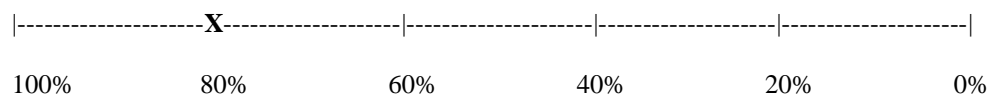
## Appendix 3 - Judges Opinions

### Judge A Opinion

1a. To what extent did the client change over the course of the natural-awareness workshop?



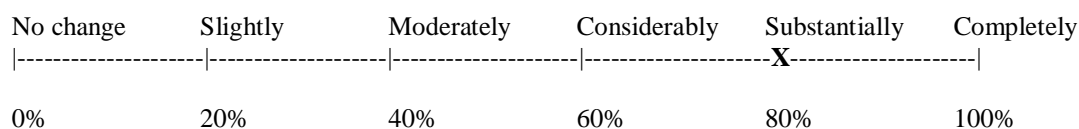
1b. How certain are you?



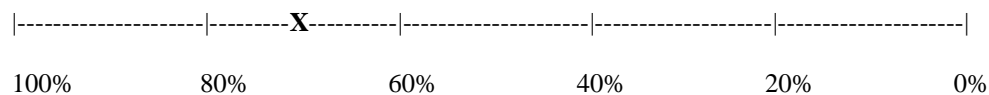
1c. What evidence presented in the affirmative and sceptic cases mattered most to you in reaching this conclusion? How did you make use of this evidence?

I reviewed the client's scores (the PQ scores, especially the difference between those at the start of workshop and six weeks later; Helpful aspects of therapy in Section 5) and the narrative account obtained in the follow-up interview. I paid somewhat more attention to the detailed narrative account compared to the scores. Client compliance and measurement error may have had an effect.

2a. To what extent is this change due to the natural-awareness exercises?



2b. How certain are you?



2c. What evidence presented in the affirmative and sceptic cases mattered most to you in reaching this conclusion? How did you make use of this evidence?

Again, I reviewed both the scores given by the client and her narrative account both at the end of the day (helpful aspects of therapy) and the follow up interview.

Client compliance may have had some effect, on the scores. Though, from her account in the follow up interview she seems to give an authentic response and she was able to say that there were still aspects that hadn't changed (eg staying asleep is still an issue).

Some of the changes may be a domino effect, as she stated. For example, taking up meditation on a daily basis as well as going to classes may have had a positive effect on reducing her anxiety/feeling more relaxed. This in turn would have had a positive effect on her sleep and blood pressure. So, some of the changes may have started only *post* workshop.

The client also mentions several times that she feels safe and comfortable in nature itself. The environment put her “in a receptive state of mind”.

She also clearly states – when talking about her determination - that “it’s an equal combination of the environment, how everything was directed, by the facilitator and the support that I felt from the other people as well”. So, other factors are at play beyond the exercises themselves.

3a. What therapy processes do you feel were helpful to the client?

The exercises which provided 100% counter evidence for her beliefs.  
‘Find a Tree Like Me’ – client states that trees have always made her feel safe.

3b. Which characteristics and/or personal resources of the client do you feel enabled her to make best use of her therapy?

The determination which she brought to therapy and the willingness to do things – though after some gentle persuasion by the facilitator – to do things she had never done before, allowing her to have a bodily felt experience of change.

## Appendix 4 – Description of Nature-Awareness Exercises

### Section 1: Overview of Nature-awareness Exercises

Nature-awareness exercises and games have become very popular with many bushcraft and tracking schools in the UK as a fun way for trainee's to expand their awareness of nature, develop their sensory skills, and provide some light entertainment after the days training was over. "Bushcraft is considered a long term extension of survival skills" (Wikipedia 2010). Bushcraft is about living in harmony with and thriving in the natural environment longer term, whilst survival skills are about staying alive long enough to be rescued. The nature-awareness exercises are presented as a series of nature-based games, sensory and awareness exercises, primitive skills, meditations, solo reflective time, and group sharing (McMullan, 2008). They are intended to be fun, and to inspire a playful child-like sense of wonder towards nature. Whilst at the same time gently challenging the participants to explore beyond their existing pre-conception of nature and their relationship to it.

The nature-awareness games themselves come from a variety of sources. Many originate from the work of Joseph Cornell, a nature-awareness instructor who has worked primarily with children for many years (Cornell, 1998). Geoffrey McMullan along with Hannah Nicholls also added their own games (McMullan, 2008). I have added my own exercise 'Find a Tree Like Me', which reflects my background and training in Contemporary Psychotherapy. Other exercises have their origins in primitive living skills, and the tracking and hunting techniques of several aboriginal cultures, particularly North American Indians. Most people these days learn these skills as a way to observe and appreciate nature (Brown, 1984). Heightened awareness is needed to be able to effectively track wild animals by being aware of the slightest disturbances they leave behind in the environment as they move through it. The ability to move quietly through the natural environment, while blending in and creating as little disruption as possible is also an invaluable skill. (Brown 1984)

### **Adding Therapeutic Intent - Natural Awareness Therapy**

Geoffrey McMullan an ex-soldier, experienced bushcraft and tracking instructor, and qualified addictions counsellor, developed Natural Awareness Therapy from his experiences whilst working with groups of addicts at a rehabilitation centre (McMullan, 2012). Natural Awareness Therapy adds a therapeutic intent to the existing nature-awareness games and exercises. The exercises and games are intended to be both fun and challenging whilst inspiring a sense of curiosity. By playing, participants are more able to learn about their boundaries and capabilities. Through taking part in the exercises and games, participants are given the opportunity to observe their own thoughts, feelings and behaviours, and become more aware of their inner landscape through their experiences of their external environment. Metaphor and symbolism are used throughout, as a way to connect the participants new awareness of their reactions and any thoughts provoked by challenges within an exercise, to their mental issues in day to day life (McMullan 2008).

### **In Practice**

All exercises begin with a walk from base-camp to an area in the woodland that is suitable for that particular exercise. Once the exercise is complete, we discuss our experiences as a group, before walking back to base-camp. All exercises take place away from the base-camp. At base-camp time is scheduled for refreshments, meals and solo time for reflection and journaling.

A general overarching frame (Bandler and Grinder, 1982) for all the exercises is that *'nature will teach you something if you pay attention'*. Participants are therefore primed to look for meaning in whatever they happen to experience. During many of the exercises it is suggested that the participants keep in mind the problem they came to work on, and to relate any experience they might have during the exercises to the problem, a solution, or their life in general.

The awareness expansion skills are the first exercises that are taught as they are used in most of the other exercises. Almost all the exercises utilise altered states, whether that be deliberately created as in the guided meditations and trance work, or naturally occurring as a result of the intense focus or emotional content of the exercise.

At the start of each exercise a very brief overview is given but not a detailed description of what exactly is going to happen. Information is usually given incrementally as each stage of the exercise is completed. This is done to inhibit intellectualisation of what is happening or about to happen, and to assist in keeping their awareness in the moment. By keeping the mind quiet with attention in the moment and focused on the felt sense, intruding problematic cognitions about the past or future become all the more obvious.

Very little talking actually takes place during the exercises. The therapist observes participants closely for signs of difficulties, or opportune moments, to step in and explore what is going on for them in terms of their thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Brief suggestions may be given to nudge their awareness in a direction that will hopefully help them find their own insights and solutions, or connect to their own personal resources.

After each exercise a group discussion takes place in which participants share their experiences.

## Section 2: Description of Individual Nature-awareness Exercises

The follow is a brief description of the exercises chosen for the workshop.

### Awareness Expansion and Meditation Exercises

**Duration:** ~ 90 minutes

**Setting:** An area of woodland with a dense canopy and relatively open area underneath was chosen. As it allowed the participants to easily find a distant point of focus between the trees and also provided some cover from the rain shower that had just started.

**Description:**

These exercises were all taught together, and consist of three awareness exercises (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic), a breathing exercise and a grounding meditation.

**Purpose:** There are several reasons why these exercises were chosen. The relaxation helps the person to physically and mentally relax. This can be especially helpful for someone suffering from anxiety. The simultaneous internal and external sensory focus helps the participant to be more aware of their 'felt sense', and the outward focus helps them be aware of the environment around them. These exercises bear considerable similarity to what Gilligan calls 'Three Point Attention' (Gilligan, 1997, p90) and produce similar results. They exercises focus awareness on the raw sensory information, rather than the thoughts about the sensory information. A mindful process which appears to reduce the cognitions that can often cause or maintain the anxiety. There is also a conscious overloading process as the participant attempts to focus on multiple

internal and external stimuli, which again can have the effect of quietening the cognitive mind. In order to achieve this focus on multiple stimuli, the participant needs to learn to 'let go' to some degree. Another benefit of this exercise is that it often produces a mildly altered state.

## Sit-Spot

**Duration:** 40 minutes to 60 minutes

**Setting:** Participants choice

**Description:**

The sit-spot exercise (McMullan, 2011) was repeated three times during the weekend. It usually done as the first and last exercise of each day. The duration of the first sit-spot was 40 minutes, and the final two were each 1 hour in length.

Each morning after breakfast, and each evening as it got dark, participants were asked to wander off alone into the woods and find a place that appealed to them, where they could just sit still, sit quietly, observe, and make use of the awareness and relaxation exercises that they had already been taught.

**Purpose:** This simple exercise aims to provide a number of benefits to the participant. Firstly it allows them to practice the awareness, relaxation and meditative exercises. Secondly it gives time to process and reflect on the workshop activities and their own lives. Thirdly sitting still, quietening the mind, and grounding the body while expanding and directing their focus outward should enable participants to become considerably more aware of their environment. Fourthly the therapeutic framing often causes participants to map their observations of nature metaphorically onto their problems, and in doing so it often helps them gain greater insight and find solutions.

## Fox Walk

**Duration:** ~ 1 hour

**Setting:** Wooded area relatively free of undergrowth.

**Description:**

The Fox Walk (Brown Jr., 1983) is a very effective way of walking quietly and inconspicuously through the woods, and is based on the way foxes walk. Fox tracks have footprints that are strung out along a line, as they walk by placing their paws almost directly in front of one another. Native American Indians have used this method as a way to quietly stalk their prey. In nature observation and tracking (Brown Jr., 1983) it is used to stalk quietly into an area with minimal disturbance so that you can observe nature without scaring it away.

**Purpose:** Firstly it is a kind of moving meditation, which requires the participant sustain attention on both the peripheral visual field and sensations within the feet. This can have the effect of keeping the participants attention very much in the here and now, and focused within their body rather than in their head. This usually produces a naturally occurring altered state which has the effect of quietening the cognitive mind.

From previous workshops it was noticed that people who look down at their feet while doing the exercise aren't looking where they are going and will often get themselves into trouble by walking into brier patches, bushes and other obstacles. They then expend time and energy extracting themselves from the trouble. Those who look ahead to where they want to be, and use peripheral vision to keep awareness on the bigger picture of the environment around them, will



seem to avoid obstacles with little or no apparent effort.

This exercise was chosen because it is a metaphor for how many people with anxiety can focus on the potential problems and getting drawn into thinking about them rather than focusing on where they want to be.

### **Rope Walk (A.k.a. Blind Trail)**

(Cornell, 1998)

**Duration:** ~30 minutes

**Setting:** A mixed area of woodland with a variety of trees and bushes and terrains.

**Description:**

A blindfolded subject is led by a sight-guide to a rope that has been carefully placed over, under, through and around a variety of natural objects and terrains that will provide an interesting sensory experience. As the subject follows along the rope they can pause and explore whatever they find. At times they will also need to navigate over or around obstacle using their sense of spacial awareness informed only by the sense of touch.

**Purpose:** This simple exercise aims to expand the participants sensory experiences by having them navigate a route whilst their main sense is inhibited by the blindfold. Like all the other blindfold exercises this one can help develop trust. This can be a level of trust in those around the subject, and also trust in subjects own abilities.

### **Tracking Intentions (A.k.a. Track Me)**

**Duration:** ~1 Hour

**Setting:** An area of relatively flat sandy soil was chosen for this exercise, as it allowed the ground to be raked up so that footprints could be more easily observed.

**Description:**

The tracking intention exercise (McMullan, 2012) has its origins in tracking skills. Tracking skills are used to follow an animal or a person's trail across a landscape.

As a person or animal moves through an environment they interact with it and alter it in some way. These alterations may be tiny or large but mostly they can be observed if you know where and how to look. It might be as obvious as a footprint, or crushed twig, or something more subtle like a bent piece of grass.

It is suggested that our thoughts and emotional state leaks out through our physical body and our language. Which ripples out like waves influencing their relationships with other people and the world around them.

**Purpose:** It acts as a metaphor for looking at something familiar in a new and different way. By asking the participants to closely examine a simple footprint in detail, they were actually able to successfully glean information about the emotional state of the person who left it.

This exercise also aimed to improve observation skills, powers of deduction, and increased sensory awareness.

### **Find a Tree Like Me**

This exercise was developed by the author and was originally inspired by some of the stories in

the book *Healing With Nature* (Scott, 2003). It also incorporates ideas from the authors own training in Contemporary Psychotherapy.

**Duration:** Total time ~2.5 hours.

**Setting:** This exercise was carried out on in large relatively flat clearing on the mountainside, looking down into the valley and across at the mountains beyond. It was chosen largely because of the expansive panoramic view, and sense of open space.

**Description:**

Part 1 - Find a Tree Like Me

Part 2 - Find A Tree Like I Want To Be

Part 3 - Group Discussion

Part 4 - Trance work

**Purpose:** The aim is to help the participants reinforce changes in perspective, and also draw together insights, positive resources and other helpful experiences from across the weekend, and anchor them more fully into their current and future lives.

### Drum Stalk

(McMullan, 2011)

**Setting:** An area of woodland with large mature trees, a variety of terrains, bushes and other potential obstacles was chosen to provide a challenge to the blindfolded participant. The sound from the drum will bounce around the large trees making it difficult at times to determine its true direction.

**Duration:** ~2 to 3 hours.

**Purpose:** The aim of this game again is not about whether the participant completes the challenge or not, it is about discovering what thoughts, feelings and reactions are brought into conscious awareness, and what they learn about themselves as they participate. Blindfolding the participant and having them focus their awareness inwardly on their bodily sensations for a sustained period of time can have the effect of throwing into stark relief the cognitive and somatic aspects of their thought processes.

Participants will tend to use the same coping strategies to deal with problems within the exercise as they would do in their day to day lives. The responses within the exercise can become a physical metaphor for these coping strategies. For example, some participants will give up very quickly and stay around the same spot. Others will attempt to crash wildly through obstacles. Whilst others will veer off in the opposite direction as soon as they meet an obstacle, rather than work their way around it. Another participant, acting as a sight-guide felt an overwhelming urge to help the blindfolded subject.

At moments where the subject appears to be challenged by the exercise, I will usually quietly intervene and ask what is going on inside their mind and body in order to increase their insight, and then guide their attention back to a grounded feeling with their focus again on their 'felt sense'.

### Meet a Tree

**Setting:** An area of woodland with a large number of similar trees was chosen.

**Duration:** ~2 to 3 hours.

**Description:**

During the Meet a Tree exercise (Cornell, 1998) participants pair up, each then takes turns at being the subject and sight-guide. The subject is blindfolded and the sight-guide leads the subject along a random route among the trees to a random tree of the sight-guides choosing. The subject is then left to 'connect' with the tree. This is an exploration emotionally and physically of how it feels to be with the tree. After a few minutes the sight-guide leads the subject along another random route back to the start point and the blindfold is removed. The subject is then asked to think of 'their tree', recall how it felt, reconnect with the feeling in their body, and using their 'felt sense' (Gendlin, 2003) as a compass find their tree again. The exercise is over when the subject touches their tree, or decides to stop.

The observations of the participant, sight-guide and facilitator are discussed and related to potential problems and strengths in the participant's life.

**Purpose:** The object of this exercise like many of the other exercises, is not about whether the participant completes the challenge or not, it is about what thoughts, feelings and reactions are brought into conscious awareness, and what they learn about themselves as they participate. Blindfolding the participant and having them repeatedly bring their awareness back to their bodily sensations for a sustained period of time appears to have the effect of sharply highlighting the cognitive and somatic aspects of their thought processes.

Participants will tend to use the same coping strategies to deal with problems within the exercise as they would do in their day to day lives. For example, some participants will give up very quickly and stay in the same spot. Others will crash wildly through obstacles. Whilst others will veer off in the opposite direction as soon as they hit an obstacle, rather find their way around it.

### Section 3: Weekend Workshop Timetable

Table 6. Workshop Timetable (All times are approximate)

<b>Friday</b>	
2:00pm	<i>Research participant arrived and initial data was collected. Simplified Personal Questionnaire problems created and rated. Initial outcome measures scored.</i>
3:00pm	Other workshop participants arrive and set up their tents.
4:30pm	Introductions and Overview of the Workshop
5:30pm	Dinner
6:30pm	Awareness Expansion Exercises, Relaxation and Meditations Exercises
8:00pm	Journaling Time
	<i>Research Participant completed the Helpful Aspects of Therapy forms for the days exercises.</i>

<b>Saturday</b>	
8:00am	Get up and have breakfast
9:30am	Sit-Spot
10:20am	Journaling Time
10:40am	Fox Walk
11:40am	Tracking Intentions
1:00pm	Lunch
2:00pm	Meet a Tree
4:00pm	Drum Stalk

6:00pm	Dinner
7:00pm	Sit-Spot
8:00pm	Journaling Time
	<i>Research Participant completed the Helpful Aspects of Therapy forms for the days exercises.</i>

<b>Sunday</b>	
8:00am	Get up and have breakfast
9:30am	Sit-Spot
10:20am	journaling Time
10:40am	Rope Walk
11:40am	Find a Tree Like Me – Part 1
12:15pm	Lunch
1:15pm	Find a Tree Like me – Part 2 & 3
2:05pm	Find a Tree Like me – Part 4 – Integration Trancework
2:40pm	Feedback & farewells
3:00pm	Finish - Pack up tents and leave
3:30pm	<i>The research participant stayed behind for an additional 45 minutes to complete her HAT forms for the days exercises. She also rated her end of workshop Personal Questionnaire form and returned the HAT Forms which she had completed at the end of each day.</i>

#### **Section 4: Exercises completed by the research participant**

- Awareness Expansion Exercises and Breathing and Grounding Meditation
- Sit-spot (Saturday morning)
- Fox Walk
- Rope Walk (Blindfold game)

- Tracking Intentions
- Sit-spot (Saturday evening)
- Sit-spot (Sunday morning)
- Find a Tree Like Me

### **Section 5: Exercises the research participant chose to opt-out of:**

The participant chose to opt out of the following exercises due to fears about her balance whilst blindfolded:

- Find a Tree (Blindfold game)
- Drum Stalk (Blindfold game)

## Appendix 5 – Qualitative Data

### Section 1: Change Interview Transcript

#### 1. General Questions:

Recording started after questions 1b of the Change Interview Protocol after we had filled in both the Psychopharmacological Medication Record (See appendix for details), and the Change List (see table). Recording consent was verbally re-confirmed with Amy before starting the recording devices.

**R1: Thank you for attending this interview. We are going to look at what changes may or may not have taken place since the workshop.**

**R2: I'd just like to confirm that you are happy to proceed with the recording of this interview?**

C1: Yes

1c.

**R3: So just very generally, how did you find the workshop? How did it feel to participate in the workshop from a therapeutic sense?**

C2: It was good, it was really different for me because I've never done anything in a group setting before in terms of therapy. I've had therapy a few years before and counselling, but it has always been one-to-one. Sharing my fears and innermost feelings in front of a group of other people was simultaneously quite nerve racking but liberating at the same time. These were other people who were in the same boat as me. They have all had issues as well. One of the things I'm working on is being the focus of attention and speaking up and communicating with people face-to-face but it is more to do with with people in authority where I'm feeling vulnerable and insecure and at and being judged. I guess, I have a big fear of being judged. So it was good to work on it, from that perspective it was a big bugbear of mine. So being in the focus of attention was therapy in itself. All the people there won't judging me and the fact that they all had their own issues to deal with put us on a level footing, level playing field.

**R4: So you were all in the same boat?**

C3: Yes, pretty much so. I suppose it engaged my empathy. It's like having a fear of flying and sitting next to someone who is even more scared of flying than you are. I go into caring mode and seem to forget my own anxieties.

**R5: So it changes your perspective?**

C4: Yes. That is one of the things that I needed to work on.

**R6: So it sounds like participating in the group in itself was therapeutic?**

C5: Yes. It was something I didn't think I was going to be able to do, I was just going to sit back and observe and listen to other people so actually no one was more surprised than me at the level of participation that I had during the group sessions. Particularly as you're making yourself vulnerable, really you are talking about your innermost feelings and insecurities and that is something I generally feel uncomfortable with. There is something about the natural environment as well that made me feel more relaxed. I am more relaxed in the countryside anyway, there is something so tranquil and restful in the natural environment, it made me feel more at ease than I would in a more formal setting. Whereas if you are just sitting where you can hear the birds and see the trees and feel the warm breeze on your skin. I just automatically feel more at ease, or at least I do. I assume that's part of the process, it certainly worked for me, it made me far more comfortable than I would have done in a more formal situation.

**R7: Does simply being in nature allow you to be more comfortable?**

C6: Yes. It's also dispels a lot of the anxieties that I would have had normally in a group setting plus I am quite claustrophobic and agoraphobic I am not comfortable in an enclosed environment with other people and the more people that there are in the more uncomfortable I feel. So had I been in a group setting, in a room inside a building with a closed door behind me I would probably have been at a very high level of anxiety. Whereas being in a natural environment with no doors means I can walk away if I want to, that in itself means that I feel very relaxed and comfortable and more able to participate, I think if I had been in a group therapy setting in a room I would have been too anxious to have participated so I think the environment was a very key part of the process for me and it enabled me to feel comfortable enough to take part in speaking up.

**R8: So despite being in a situation in which would normally not have felt comfortable enough to speak up, you actually found that you could relax enough to participate fully?**

C7: More so than in any other environment that I can be in, my phobia, my anxiety increases exponentially according to what environment I'm in. With the top one being something like being in a formal situation and I am the focus of their attention in a room particularly if the door is closed and there is no exit. If I was in a social situation like a party, again you're inside a house that is frightening, but I will always have a fair amount of alcohol in order to make myself feel more comfortable in that environment because again you're in an enclosed environment with other people. Whereas for some reason being in the countryside, the open environment, the anxieties just went. I was very surprised! I can only attributed that to two things, one was the way that the workshop was facilitated, and how comfortable we were made to feel, by you. And the other participants were also very nurturing and welcoming. And the environment because it was very open literally open. The natural landscape itself was like a nurturing thing. If that makes sense.

**R9: Could you describe in a little more detail about the nurturing side of nature?**

C8: There has always been something about the natural environment, and trees in particular, trees and water. I think that make me feel safe and comfortable, it's like a primal thing, it's how things should be. I think a large part of the human races problems, the so-called civilised world, is that disconnection from nature.

**R10: So you used the word disconnected, does that mean that you felt connected to nature?**

C9: Yeah, it was like the polar opposite of how I normally feel because I have been raised in the countryside, and I have been brought up with a strong connection with my environment, and I feel happy in the natural environment. I've now spent more than 20 years in a built up environment, man-made. I find it very claustrophobic, and depressing, and unnatural. I feel the more time I spend in it, the more disconnected I become and that is a stressful thing for me. I feel that I have a physical need to get out into the countryside, or as close as I can get to. Like a park or a nature reserve, it is very important for me to escape to that and reconnect to something that is green. To hear sounds, sound is very important to me, to hear bird song instead of car alarms cars and drunks. Its lovely to just sit and hear birds and wind in the trees, it feels right.

**R11: So just going back to something you talked about when you were talking about being in the group being easier than you expected. Did you feel connected as you spoke in the group? To the environment or to the people?**

C10: Well I suppose both.

C11: Yeah both I'd say, because in the wider community because we were so disconnected from the man with and everything that was familiar to us, or we think it's 1 million tourists but really the natural environment is what is intrinsically familiar to us, it's where we are meant to be.

C12: There is something about being taking out of our normal environment into the natural environment that levelled the playing field. We weren't just people with labels. If we were in a formal setting, or a pub, it would be so-and-so PR executive, or so-and-so business manager and we would all have our titles and roles to play. Taking us out of that environment where those labels and roles are of paramount importance, putting us in a natural environment made me feel like I'm here with a lot of other people, and the names are important, but not what they do in what I would say is the artificial world. You are removed from that world, therefore the labels are cool with it I moved, and it really didn't matter if the person there was the CEO of IBM or someone who was long term unemployed on sickness benefit. It put us all on a level playing field. We were all just human beings in a natural environment. It made empathy stronger, like we were all kindred spirits. So I felt connected to them as similar human beings. We all have problems which we were there to work on.

**R12: So you had some sort of common purpose?**

C13: Yeah, it's almost like we're a family for the weekend, we were connected by the experience and the environment with no distractions which you would get in a built up environment. The only distraction would be a bird flying by.

**R13: Something about that scenario has shifted because you were able to talk more freely without anxiety in the group?**

C14: Yeah it was a real surprise to me!

**R14: What do you specifically attributed that to, what was going on in your mind and your body?**

C15: Well my anxiety levels were down because I didn't feel judged because I felt safe, because I felt nurtured by the environment, and I felt comfortable. Therefore my anxiety levels dropped right down, and my tensions, and those are things that make me avoid speaking out, avoid communicating my feelings, the things that affect me, physically, when my heart races, stutter and stammer, fists clenched and get totally tongue tied and gets shaky. If I ever have to speak in front of people I will shake from head to toe and it can be very hard for me to do that. It is why I have chosen an occupation that is about written communication, I can hide behind a keyboard and think carefully



about what I'm going to say, and I can choose to ignore emails. It can be a lot harder to do that face-to-face sense and I've not had a lot of experience of it. In fact I have made a lifetime studying of avoiding anything like that. So yeah it was challenging for me to be able to deal with other people.

**R15: So what do you attributed that change to your anxiety to? Is it being more connected to the environment and the people, or the facilitator, or is it something else?**

C16: All of those things, without a shadow of doubt.

**R16: Or is there anything else?**

C17: No I don't think there is anything else, except the determination that I brought to the workshop to make a change. I definitely had that otherwise I wouldn't be here in the first place. These issues have been holding me back pretty much all my entire life and I felt crippled by them. I thought it was time to do something about it. So I brought that determination to the workshop, but that is the only thing that I feel I have brought externally. I feel it's an equal combination of the environment, how everything was directed, by the facilitator, and the support that I felt from the other people as well. I didn't feel judged because we were all in the same boat.

C18: There was a lot of humour in it, which I liked as well. It wasn't just all serious. I like the fact that you brought humour into it. It was relaxed and fun. A lot of it was fun, we were making serious changes and tackling serious issues, at least for me. But it was done in a way which did make me feel comfortable, it was light-hearted and I think the elements of humour that were brought into it also made me feel relaxed as well. It is a diffusing thing, isn't it?

**1d.**

**R17: How have you been doing just in general since the workshop?**

C19: A lot better. I came to the workshop specifically to work on just one or two issues and I ended up finding that there were a whole load of related issues that came up during the workshop almost like a domino effect, but a positive domino effect. I would work on issue A, which would have a positive knock on effect with issues B and C and D which I didn't even know I had. A lot of the insights that came from doing some of the exercises were fairly profound actually. There were some exercises that was so emotionally moving, one in particular, that it made a permanent shift in the way that I looked at myself definitely, and also altering my perspective of how I look at my problems, and how I approach my life. I think because some of them were so powerful that they stuck with me in a way that a year of counselling hadn't done. I didn't find counselling helpful other than as a pleasant chat. Really no more helpful than having a chat with a random stranger.

**R18: So even though it has only been five or is it six weeks since the workshop are there any changes that have stayed with you?**

C20: Yeah definitely I think the perspective is that the one I keep coming back to. There were a few of the exercises that we did that raised that issue, or I suppose my subconscious raise the issue and the environment give me answers. It has really helped not to get things out of proportion, it was a big part of what drew me to the workshop. My focus of attention was always too narrow with my attention always on the obstacles rather than on the solution. My attention was always too close, like having the focus on a camera locked up on something right in front of you, and everything else becomes so completely out of focus that you can't even see it, so that it may as well not be there. It was kind of like that and sensory perception exercises in particular brought by one up for me, literally into sharp focus, it showed me what an issue that was for me and how to alter it.

## **2. Self-Description:**

**2a.**

**R19: How would you describe yourself?**

C21: I'm a work in progress I'd say.

A helper I suppose. Previously I would say doormat but now I would say helper is that is more positive. I'm a communicator, I have strong communication skills. I help people largely through communication.

**R20: I'm assuming your anxiety impacts you work?**

C22: Yeah I'm much better at helping other people than I am at helping myself.

**2b.**

**R21: How would the people who know you well describe you?**

C23: Contradictory. Because I can be bubbly and friendly and positive and happy but I've got a flip side which is the exact opposite and I can be evil and bad tempered and cantankerous and intolerant and very self-critical.

C24: I can't take a compliment.

**2c.**

**R22: if you could change something about yourself what would it be?**

C25: Younger slimmer more attractive. (Laughs)

C26: I'd like to be more confident, a lot more confident and have some self-belief. Feel confident and assertive. I've got to get the balance right between assertiveness and being aggressive and losing my temper.

**R23: What does confidence mean for you for?**

C27: Be successful. To make a success of my business. I want to be successfully self-employed and not work for anyone else.

C28: I would like to be able to talk to my family without descending into a shouting match. I'd like to go to say no to people, business and family.

**R24: Anything else you want to add to that?**

C29: No, that's fine.

**3. Changes:**

**3a.**

**R25: What changes if any have you noticed in yourself since the workshop?**

C30: I'd say the perspective is a big one for me, it cropped up in a number of the exercises. And not just in the exercises but also in my experience outside the exercises, provided by the environment. In the sensory expansion exercise, it gave me the idea of perspective and widening one's perceptions gives you a wider picture. Instead of focusing on the small things you see the bigger picture and that itself is very helpful because you are then not focusing on just the negatives, you are seeing everything else and you realise that what you were focusing on is just a tiny thing that is not such a big deal when you look at in the wider picture. Something that reinforced that was that there were buzzards circling around the whole time and you would look at them and think what would it be like to get a bird's eye view. You would get an even better idea of the perspective and how tiny those problems are in relation to the bigger picture of your life. Which is why since then I've taken to wearing a pendant of the silver feather to remind me of my experience on the workshop in the same way that people might wear a cross. Sometimes I forget that I catch my reflection in the mirror and see it and it reminds me. Particularly if I am having a negative self-image day, getting angry, and I catch my reflection in the mirror and think and think it's not such a big deal in the bigger picture of things so it's a nice way of I'm anchoring myself to the revelations I got from some of the exercises.

C31: Focus was a big thing as well. Particularly from the fox walking exercise, and again it ties in with that perspective thing, the widening of perceptions. I've been more focused, I notice I'm normally all over the place shooting off in 200 different directions and not sticking with just one thing. That is something that seems to have changed, definitely for the better.

C32: It's speaking to other people and groups, I haven't done in a formal situation since then it has been more of a social situation but I've been more comfortable with that.

**R26: So you are more comfortable socially in groups?**

C33: Yeah

**R27: But you've not had a chance in a formal group?**

C34: No, just socially.

**R27a: Well it has only been a few weeks since the workshop.**

C35: That is my next challenge. I am trying to set myself challenges. That's the thing that is a positive, because there were things that I did in the workshop that I was afraid of but did anyway. I've sort of taken that through into my life beyond that, and I have been trying things that I normally run a mile from. My first instinct is always I can't do that. I am the poster child for avoidance. But because I managed to stick with some of the workshop exercises, and do some of the ones I found that I would have said I couldn't have done. That made me feel that I could try things in my life now.

**R28: What do you feel has changed that has allowed you to do those things?**

C36: I would say in relation to doing things that I didn't, that I would have avoided before, I would say that my confidence has gone up, well definitely because that is how I perceive my abilities I'm so used to saying I can't do something and then not doing it because I don't want to be proved right, particularly in front of other people. To do exercises despite having those doubts, and to actually successfully complete the exercises with other people watching, made me think well actually if I can do it then I can do it in other areas of my

life.

**R29: So in a sense you've pushed through your own barriers and limitations?**

C37: Yeah. With some help and encouragement.

**R30: So has been a change in perspective, focus, and confidence. Anything else?**

C38: Change in making myself vulnerable. Being noticed is something I've always had a problem with. I have this weird conflict in my head where I don't want to be noticed but I get frustrated if I'm not. It's like I want to be noticed but in the right way. I'd want to be acknowledged for things that I've done, but I want people to see that I need help because I'm not good at asking for it. One of the exercises made that clear for me quite strongly and made me realise that if I want help I've got to ask for it. Sometimes you have to make yourself vulnerable in order to get you want. You literally have to stick your neck out.

**R31: What change do you think contributed to that?**

C39: You are my business I stuck my neck out more. I've always been crap at business because I don't like being noticed, and you can't really expect people to psychically know about what you do. I don't advertise myself and never have done. I'm afraid of putting myself out there. Afraid of being noticed. I'm afraid if someone does notice me and asked me to do a job. That I will not do a good enough job and people will think I'm crap. Which isn't very good recipe for a business person, so what I've learned is that I now have to put myself out there. Make myself vulnerable. Risk making mistakes.

**R32: Do you think that your change has allowed you to take more risks?**

C40: Yeah I guess so. It is a risk if I tell people about my services and they engage me, it is a risk because they might think I don't do a good enough job. And that's what I'm afraid of being a perfectionist. I don't like criticism or failure. I don't like failure which is one of the reasons I don't try anything. But I realise now I have to make myself vulnerable to get what I need.

**R33: Have you made any other changes since the workshop?**

C41: I've started meditating because I found the guided meditations and the sit-spots were a really good way of quietening my mind and relaxing. I'm one of those people who doesn't relax very easily, either physically or mentally. I think half of my problem with my insomnia is that my mind just won't shut up. The guided meditations and sit-spots were very helpful in stilling my mind, and I've combined a few of the things that we learned on the workshop. You still yourself physically and you still your mind and you concentrate entirely. Entirely on what's around you, the random things in your environment like birds flying down and sitting right in front of me and all the other things disappear, and you just become part of the woodland. It's almost like you melt into the landscape and all those thoughts that were racing around in your head just become completely inconsequential because it's like you have finally fitted in. You are in a natural place where you should be, and you are a natural part of that environment, and that in itself makes all the other silly thoughts in your head inconsequential and they disappear, and you find yourself tuning into all the creatures and plants that surround you and even the place.

**R34: You say fitting in? Do you mean part being part of it connected?**

C42: I have not only felt disconnected from the environment but have also felt disconnected from other people. When I would go off when I was a teenager. I would go for walks in the countryside. I was lucky to have countryside on my doorstep. So I'd go off by myself on the bike all day on my own. I felt like I belonged. I was comfortable in the natural environment and didn't feel that I belonged with people who just seems like more of a natural fit. I felt safe. I feel far safer walking through the woods in the middle of the night than I wouldn't walking down a street in the city.

**R35: Any other changes?**

C43: Oh my blood pressure has come down. And that's a real big surprise. I was diagnosed with hypertension shortly before the workshop. And my GP was going to put me on medication. My blood pressure had been going up, increasing every time he had taken it, since 2007. It had continued to go up and up and up, to the point where he was getting concerned. That was just before the workshop. The meditation exercises that we've learned, I carried through into my life, when I came home. I forced myself to stop and sit and relax and do some meditation. Just to calm my mind, and my body seemed to follow. I didn't take any medication. My GP said comeback for another blood pressure test, I will have to put you on the drugs next time if it hasn't changed. So I went back about 2 to 3 weeks after the workshop and no one was more surprised than me that my blood pressure was back to normal. I know it wasn't an experiment conducted in the lab but the only thing that changed was my was my relaxing and using what I had learned in the workshop and applying that. There was no other medications or even any herbal medication.

**R36: It sounds like you continued those meditation exercises afterwards?**

C44: Well they all reduced my stress, and I'm sure it was the stress that was causing the hypertension, so when I applied what I've learned in the exercises to my life, my anxiety levels went down. It doesn't take a genius to work out to come to the conclusion that lowering the stress levels and anxiety levels would lower the physiological symptoms which manifested themselves as hypertension and headache and dizziness and insomnia. Oh and the insomnia has improved as well, it's not brilliant. I've had insomnia for my entire life as well, it's not brilliant but I've noticed a little cut down the dosage of Phenergan that I take. I've also cut down the amount of alcohol, I certainly have used alcohol as a form of self-medication for a long long time but a cut that in a room of the workshop was that it was alcohol free so I had to go for three days without any of. And that was nice it was a way of detoxing and admittedly me appreciate the environment much more as well because if you feel fuzzy handed over from the night before. It was nice to the clear head and it was funny because when you're camping, it's uncomfortable and you cannot sleep well but I was surprised to find how lucid I felt, even after I felt that I just do list for the first nine, and are expected to feel like death warmed up. I came out of my tent thought I feel tired but I actually feel quite sparkly. There was something about just being in the landscape that was electrifying like I got an energy from the place. Did it feel like a rechargeable battery. So I was physically tired for my mind seemed to work for a better, and it was an odd but very nice feeling. Like I say that my being plugged into a battery. There is something invigorating even about the smells of the place.

**R37: have you noticed anything else?**

C45: I've noticed I'm noticing more, it's a knock-on of the peripheral vision exercise, where you make yourself more aware of what is around. I've been doing that not just visually have also been trying to take note of everything around me. Again its about focus again, just being more aware of my surroundings and the people around me as well. Listen to people more. When I get tense I talk all the time, I get so wound up with nervous energy and talk over talk people. It taught me to quieten my mind I think and to slow down.

**R38: It sounds like your attention was more outwards rather than in your head?**

C46: Yes. That was helpful because if it is all internal you can become very self-involved and the anxiety seems to follow. I think the anxiety probably is part of being too self focused. If you move your focus outwards more, then widen your awareness you become more aware of what's around you instead of focusing on everything to do with you.

**R39: I suppose while we are on that topic. How are you feeling about yourself?**

C47: I am kinder towards myself. Are we not going into specific exercises at this point?

There was one exercise the 'find a tree like me' exercise that in a nutshell taught me compassion towards myself in a very powerful emotional way. It was one of the most moving experiences I've ever had. Again it was like making a connection to another living thing. The only difference was that it was a giant plant. I felt a huge compassion towards the tree, but really it was compassion towards myself. Which is something I've never allowed myself. I became more forgiving of the flaws within myself. In a way that exercise turned everything on its head, the empathy I was extended flaws literally was actually being extended towards myself. It was one of those Eureka moments when I realised the compassion for the trees flaws were actually compassion for my own flaws, and my strengths. I acknowledge my flaws and the rocky start I had, and also to see that I've got strengths. I can still flourish despite despite the damage, and not just flourish but serve a useful purpose.

**R40: What about your strengths?**

C48: Again the exercise made me acknowledge my strengths. Which is my persistence and the fact that I am actually a survivor because I have weathered a lot of storms. Perhaps a lot of other people, or trees might have toppled, but I am still here.

**R41: So there has been a few positive changes then. Anything else?**

C49: No I don't think so.

**4. Change Ratings:**

(Amy's list of changes had been written down on the Change List before the recording started.)

**R42: So let's look through the Change List.**

**R43: Perspective?**

C50: that's being really helpful

**R44: Focus?**

**R45: Confidence?**

C51: Confidence is to do with me. It's self-belief. I have a lot of confidence in my skills I just don't believe in myself enough to tell people about it.

**R46: So what has changed?**

C52: My skills haven't changed, its more about me putting myself out there and telling people. And charging for it, putting a value on myself, which is something I've never done before. Its self-worth.

**R47: Is self-worth more accurate than confidence?**

C53: Yes

**R48: You mention meditation and stilling your mind?**

C54: I wish we had a recording of the guided meditation we did on top of the hill. That was great. It felt like a holiday after that.

**R49: Blood pressure?****R50: Insomnia?**

C55: Improved a tiny bit. It's probably the least progress I've made but its so deep rooted that I think it's going to take a lot of work. But it has improved some.

C56: Self-worth is the biggie, that is the wonkey foundation my entire life is built on.

C57: It is changing in the right direction because my sleep has been getting progressively worse, some of my sleep has changed, it is still progress even if it's only change the time you.

C58: It is changing in the right direction. So the fact that it is changing is progress.

**R51: Alcohol?**

C59: It is my number one crutch. It is my coping mechanism.

**R52: Self forgiving?**

4a.

**R:53 So we will rate each of these, so how much did you expect to change your perspective?****How important was it to you? How likely do you think the change would have been with therapy?**

C60: No, it wasn't something I'd specifically come to work on. It wasn't really something I had acknowledged. It is a very powerful changes as well. I knew I had a problem getting things out of proportion but I hadn't really put a label on it.

C61: Extremely important. Unlikely with therapy and very surprised.

**R53a: Same three questions about focus?**

C62: It is not something I would put words on but yes I wanted to change what I put my attention on, I suppose. I'd put it somewhere nearer the middle of your score. Not completely expected a two.

C63: Unlikely. It's not something I've been working on with anybody else so unlikely again.

C64: Extremely important.

**R54: Confidence?** (Originally Confidence was written on the form but later she renamed it to Self-worth as she felt it was more accurate)

C65: it was not something I'd specifically expected to work on because I come with ideas for other issues, so I was surprised. I know it was a key problem but I didn't think you'd be worked on in these workshops. I didn't really know what the exercises were about.

C66: I was very surprised by the change. Unlikely to have made a change without therapy. Extremely important.

**R55: Relaxation?**

C67: I had expectations about that so not entirely surprised because of the way the workshop was described. I had expected to have some sort of relaxation and meditation.

It has been extremely helpful to me.

**R: How likely?**

C68: Not very likely. I'm very stressed. I never done any kind of guided meditation or any kind of meditation before. It's one of those things have always been advised to do.

Extremely important, because it was disciplining my thoughts.

**R56: Hypertension**

C69: Now I didn't expect that. I certainly didn't expect a lasting change. I thought I might be more chilled out over the course of the weekend. But I didn't expect it when I went to my GP a couple of weeks later and to be told that. I would say very surprised about it.

**R56a: How likely without therapy?**

C70: Given my blood pressure has been going up steadily since 2007 I would say there is no chance of improving outside of the workshop. The GP wanted a drug intervention. I was getting very anxious because I thought I might die from it, so it is extremely important.

**R57: Insomnia**

C71: it wasn't something I was hoping to work on.

**R57a: How expected was that?**

C72: Neither expected or surprised

**R57b: how likely do you think would have been to make that change if you haven't been on the workshop?**

C73: Neutral, neither.

**R57c: How important is that change been?**

C74: The fact that there has been some change was very important to me. Because at least it is going in the right direction.

C75: Moderately because at least some change.

**R58: Alcohol consumption**

C76: very pleased about that because it's another thing my GP has been nagging me about.

**R58a: Were you surprised?**

C77: It was something I hoped might be.

Slightly expected

**R58b: how likely do you think that would have been if you had not gone to the workshop?**

C78: I don't think it would have been very likely, that has been a problem for years.

Very important, because of the health implications.

**R59: Tolerance of your flaws? How expected or surprised were you?**

C79: I don't know what expectations I had. I really thought that anger was just the end result of a whole lot of other things put together. I wouldn't have expected it to change much, it was so deep-seated. That was a big surprise.

**R59a: How likely do you feel that would have been if you hadn't been on the workshop?**

C80: Very unlikely. It has been going on for so long. That one is extremely important.

**9. Review Personal Questionnaire (PQ)**

**R60: PQ Form Review and Re-rating**

**Have a look at that, it is what you filled in before the workshop six weeks ago.**

(The interviewer hands Amy the PQ form she filled in at the beginning of the workshop)

**R61: Self-critical, how would you rate that?**

C81: Considerably. A little bit more compassion for myself

**R62: I lack self belief: so what do you feel about that now?**

C82: Still very high. It's a work in progress. Considerably

**R63: I fear of being the focus of attention: rating?**

C83: I'd say moderately, better than I was.

**R64: I lose my temper easily:**

C84: I'd say that has improved quite a bit. I have got a longer fuse than I had before. Considerably.

**R65: Relaxing the mind and body:**

C85: I'd say that was vastly improved actually. I've done more guided meditation since the workshop.

C86: What was the one before moderate?

C87: Make it is a moderate, it's not considerable.

**R66: Anxiety is affecting my relationships: how is that now?**

C88: That's better. I think I'm generally a bit more easy going so I'd say, there are still problem areas but I would say moderate.

C89: I use more humour and relaxation. Because of that the anger has dropped.

**R67: Assertiveness:?**

C90: I would still say that was a considerable problem. I have got a lifetime of crap to deal with. Still very considerable.

**R68: I see the negative first:**

C91: I think that is more of a moderate thing that. One of the things I've learned was from the perception exercises was that I learned about perspective. That you are less likely to see the negative if you can see the wider picture. If you see the wider picture you're also more likely to see the positives. I still see negative stuff but it's not the same extent as it was before.

C92: Moderate

**R69: I give up very easily: how would you rate that one?**

C93: Oh it has improved, it has always been my first course of action, was always avoidance. Largely because of things like the Rope Walk and Fox Walk, that was quite a revelation. Not falling over. They were physical things that I would normally have given up on because of my Menieres disease, and bad balance. I've convinced myself that I couldn't possibly have done anything blindfolded. I couldn't possibly have done the Fox Walking without looking at my feet. But I did both those exercises, one blindfolded where I wasn't looking at my feet, and on neither occasion did I fall over. So I thought of the metaphor for life staying focused on where you are going and you're less likely to lose your footing and fall on your ass. And that's okay too in a wider sense, so it carried through into situations my life. Into more strategic way of dealing with life and how I approach problems and not giving up on things. In both those exercises I told you I couldn't do them, and I was convinced that I couldn't do them. I would normally not even have tried them. That is a pattern that is common in my life and how I have approached other problems. I see a challenge and I run a mile from it, saying I can't do that. I'm going to fall on my ass and people are going to laugh at me. But I was encouraged in the workshop, both with the Rope-Walk and the Fox-Walk to not give up. And both those things were things I was 100% convinced that I couldn't do, I mean 100% convinced that I would fall over. On neither occasion did I do that. I really surprised myself, particularly with the Fox walk, just by changing my focus instead of focusing on my feet, I focused on where I was going. Like a cat focused on the prey, on their objective, and the body just seemed to follow, and that really seemed to surprise me. When my body just seemed to follow without me having to concentrate on it. I always paid attention to the minutiae and all the obstacles. I'm always thinking about where the obstacles are, and how I might fall here and how I might fail that. Whereas I just focused on where I wanted to go and focused on that it was like my feet just naturally found their way. So there was no falling over, and I didn't even have to think about my feet. And that's a metaphor for life if you just look where you're going.

**R70: Did you challenge your limiting beliefs?**

C94: Yeah! If I can do that with something physical then I can also do something psychological. The fear is still there but I'm doing it any.

**R71: I give up too easily: What would you rate that?**

C95: So that is improved I'd say it's down to considerably.

**R71a: So that's dropped two points. Does that seem okay?**

C95a: Well yeah. Because I've always focused on all the steps, and how all the steps can go wrong.

**R72: Lacking direction:**

C96: That is a tough one. My brain is always going off in different directions. I don't want to disappoint you but I can't really see much change in that one yet. A work in progress.

C97: Very considerable

(shows the PQ form and asks to confirm the ratings)

**5. Attributions**

**R73: So if we start with perspective, which was a big change for you. What do you think caused that change?**

C98: It was the sensory expansion thing, literally it was like having a wide-angle lens on. Whereas before I had a macro lens on my entire life and suddenly with a wide-angle lens on I was able to see everything and sharp focus.

**R74: So what was it about that exercise that helped you to change how you look at things?**

C99: Well it was a combination of that and seeing the buzzards and having an idea of the buzzards eye view. It just made things seem small. Things were so significant any more. In a wider picture or a wider scheme of things these problems seem less significant and not important. Hence wearing the silver feather pendant because it reminds me. Just to keep things in perspective and they're not going to be so big and scary.

**R75: So it has been a few weeks since the workshop? Has that outlook continued?**

C100: Definitely problems still keep coming at me but it is a case that I'm just thinking, well in the wider story of my life there is not much point in me getting totally wound up by a computer and printing, it doesn't matter as much, it's putting things into perspective, it's not that important, it's frustrating but it shouldn't be bigger. It's like when you're a child everything looks really big but really you are just very small. So the change in perspective lets me keep things in proportion.

**R76: And those specific things that happened in the last few weeks?**

C101: The thing with the computer for example. I tend to get an absolute rage with computers. I lost my Internet connection recently, which is very frustrating, because I couldn't do my work. But I thought I'll keep it in perspective and not make it into such a big deal and the fact that I did that meant that I didn't lose my temper the way I normally would have done. I just went off and use my time more productively instead of branding in raging. Literally ranting for a couple of hours to my husband. Well I thought there is nothing I can do about it so from a prospective point of view it is not really that important. So what else can I do with my time instead of standing here moaning about it I thought how can I use my time more productively. Which is what I did. That's quite a big thing for me because normally things would have been under perspective for me and out of proportion. And it would have a knock-on effect and one thing would lead to another and you have all these little problems there were just build and build and build into something big. But really not take because when you look at it from a higher vantage point it really isn't that big. So it is keeping things literally in perspective and just applying that. No major problems. Not huge incidents just everyday shit.

**R77: So you tend to get the little day-to-day things out of proportion?**

C102: That's always been the problem. I don't really have any major problems in my life, it's mostly the small stuff. That I let get out of proportion then my temper is disproportionate, my stress on is disproportionate.

**R78: So what has changed? Do you find yourself looking at that way automatically?**

#C103: No not yet. But I am hoping. I think it's a matter of practice. I've had lessons a lifetime to make me blow things out of proportion. So I am having to apply this deliberately. I tried deep breathing to slow my mind down and then deliberately applied the idea of let's keep this in perspective. I'm hoping that the more I applied that the more it will become a habit.

**R79: Is there anything else that may have caused that?**

C104: No not that I can think of. I haven't changed any medication, no no new drugs. So it must be down to this. I have been rereading my journal from the weekend so that reinforces what I've learned.

**R80: So there has been a noticeable difference?**

C105: Well yes. Other people have commented on it as well, friends and family. It can't just be me. I didn't even tell a lot of people about this workshop.

**R81: What specifically have they said?**

C106: They said I seemed more chilled. I went to a friends the other day and one of them always rants and rages which makes me rant and rage. I was completely chilled with her attitude and I didn't get angry. And she said "well you normally get cross as well, and you seem really chilled."

C107: Oh my husband said I seem happier and more chilled and more good-humoured.

**R82: So the next change was focus: how do you know it is changed?**

C108: Because I have made changes in the least in business I have because I'm trying to run my business. Problem I have is that I tend to go off in all sorts of directions, so I've slowed myself down and to trying to discipline my thoughts and how I act upon and to be a bit more single-minded.

C109: So you are taking the time to slow down and decide on the steps to get that?

Yes I made it a several step plan. If I only take one step I see that as a positive step. And try to stay focused on what I'm going for. Like that exercise we are focusing on your goal. If your focus is on the shifting attention and you follow your attention and you go all over the place. And you wouldn't actually get where you want to go.

**R83: So you feel you have actually made a change there?**

C110: Yeah. I did it in business. That is more of a plan at this stage. I want to exhibit my photos, so that is going to



be my focus on what steps can I make to facilitate that, and not get to distracted. So I made that my goal and did it.

**R84: So you have actually done it?**

C111: Well it has not been on yet, but I have put my work forward. I've now also got my work on display in a local cafe.

**R85: So is there anything else that has happened over the last few weeks that could cause that change? There is no change in medication? Have you been reading anything else? Or talking to anyone else about this?**

C112: No it's not really the sort of thing I would talk about it to anyone else.

**R86: So what about Self-worth?**

C113: That is a work in progress. It's better than it was. I think. And your 'find a tree like me' exercise, well all of them actually challenging myself and meeting that challenge make me feel better about myself. To use a tree analogy it is very deep rooted, my self-worth or lack thereof. So there's plenty I need to work on, it has changed from where it was. It's a shift in the right direction. I know think is a huge change but it is a shift in the right direction. So think as I make other changes and achieve the goals I'm going for and keep meeting challenges that I set myself tree I think the self-worth will follow because I will have more positive experiences to draw upon. I am optimistic about my self-esteem improving because I feel it has improved a little.

Just because of the workshop's, even though it's not a life, well actually they were. It actually was. I knows its a workshop environment but it is still a real life experience.

**R87: So how did that specific exercises help you feel better about yourself?**

C114: Which exercise?

**R88: You mentioned 'find a tree to tree like me'.**

C115: That gave me more compassion. Self-worth comes under this whole thing of self-criticism as well. I've always looked at myself very critically and seen myself in a very negative light. But forcing myself to look at the tree and seeing its positive things and to feeling compassion for it, the damage on it and thinking while it's actually done pretty well for itself despite the fact that it's all smashed up and burned by lightning, and all fragmented all over the place. But it is still managing to survive and to thrive, and I just thought it was really me that I was describing. It's one of those eureka moments, and you just think actually I'm ascribing all that to a tree but actually it is me that I'm talking about. Yeah, I have weathered a lot of storms and had a bit of damage, and may not be the prettiest tree in the forest but I realised I am resilient. That made me think, that I was good and that contributed to my self-worth. That made me feel my worth was better. Because I am worth more because I am surviving. It is an attribute or quality that I have.

**R89: Is that a change in your thinking is, have you integrated that, is something you feel or is something you're thinking about at the moment?**

C116: It is something that I've taken into my everyday life, when I looked at that tree I was able to see its flaws and strengths as well, and I just thought that was really just what I'm seeing within myself. It is a metaphor for me. I've been more forgiving of myself, I'm able to look at myself now and see that yes I do have flaws, but despite those flaws, I still have good qualities. There are things about me that are good. I am worth something. I could see from that tree that it was protecting things that were growing at its feet. It was providing shelter from birds that lived in it and fed off it. And even for us when we sat under it when it rained. It is providing a supporting role as it were. It is very important and I thought that is me as well I provide a supporting role. Even if it is not the leading roles, it is still a supporting role and is still important.

**R90: So did the exercise make you more aware of your strengths?**

C117: Yeah, it made me aware of not focusing on the negatives. Because previously I would have only seen the negatives within myself. Just the flaws and that exercise made me realise that that nothing is all flawed and that everything has some strengths. Even me. So I was less judgemental about myself

**R91: So was there anything else that could have caused that?**

C118: No, I think that was a moving exercise for me. I made such a deep connection with the tree in effect what I was feeling in effect was compassion for myself. I was forgiving myself for not being perfect.

**R92: Sometimes just being in a natural environment helps people to relax. You are also in a small group. Where there any interactions with the group for example did someone say something that may have enlightened you?**

C119: Another lady on the course, did show me a meditation. It helps with the breathing. So I combine that with the guided meditation where we have to think about relaxing the muscles in the body. So I do that every night now and try to relax every muscle. So I think the sound meditation, was good for the breathing, and the relaxation is good for

relaxing the body. I have less of a problem getting to sleep now. It is staying asleep that is the main problem now.

**R93: So you've learned another way to relax from one of the other participants?**

C120: Yes

C121: But the environment itself, to go back to one of your earlier questions. That was a huge contributing factor. Because it is relaxing in itself. Looking around all you can see a natural colours. There is nothing that is jarring. There is nothing that is grey or depressing. It is all bright and vibrant.

**R94: Is that responsible for the change? That is what I'm trying to focus on here. You can be nice and relaxed for two or three days in the workshop but as soon as you step out of that environment does the change carry forward?**

C122: Oh yes definitely.

**R95: So just by being in the woods for a few days, has that has contributed to you being relaxed over the last five/six weeks?**

C123: Yes. Because when I have tried to get that back by visiting some woodland near my house. Even if it is only now and again I've tried to get that back. I'd go down there sometimes but I'd sort of galloped through things without absorbing my surroundings. I used the expansion of perception exercises, and taken time to stop or slow down, and take stock and look around, and be more aware of what's around me. I seem to be doing that at home as well and even in social situations. Sometimes being still when everyone around me is a chatting, just taking stock and observing people. Sometimes people are so familiar to you and you see them all the time, sometimes you take them for granted. And you don't even notice minor changes in them. So I've been making a point to do that.

**R96: And has that helped you socially?**

C124: It has actually. There was one time I was having a conversation with someone and I noticed one of my friends was quieter than usual, just something subtle. I asked him when he was on his own if he was okay. He said he just has some problems with his company. I think he was grateful just for someone to notice and ask about it. He had been quite stressed and worried about his company. And I don't know if I would have noticed that otherwise because when you're sitting in a social group and everyone is chattering away, so perhaps you don't notice. So be more aware of people as well as trees.

**R97: So you say you're noticing things more socially. So in the past where would your focus has been when in a conversation?**

C125: Probably on trying to be heard. I am so used to being overlooked that I tend to talk quite a lot, and if you are talking a lot then you're not really listening or paying attention to others. I do pay attention to others but I could do a lot better. Since the expansion exercise I've been making a point of being more aware of what's around me. Noticing smaller details, and I think that has helped.

**R98: Relaxation, let have a look at that one. We have talked about this before in different ways. So how do you know that you are more relaxed. What evidence do you have?**

C126: The sit spots was good for relaxation. I am going to meditation classes now, just once a week as well. I tried to do at least a 10 minute meditation at home. So that is a big difference for me is.

**R99: So what do you think has helped, the sit spot or the meditation class?**

C127: The guided meditation and the sit spots were very good for relaxation because it taught me to quieten my mind and sit still and shut up.

**R100: So you've also started a meditation class?**

C128: Yes

**R101: How much do you think that contributed to your relaxation over the last few weeks?**

C129: It has bound to have an effect, but that is only one hour a week. I'm not sure that just one hour a week would have a big effect. I am trying to do meditation every day myself, based on the guided meditation techniques that we did on the workshop. The guided meditation techniques that we did on the workshop are different to what we do at the Buddhist centre. So I try to remember what I can from the guided meditation and do that myself.

**R102: So if I understand correctly you are combining techniques?**

C130: The one at the Buddhist meditation is just one hour. It is quite a spiritual thing. You are asked to meditated on specific topics.

**#R103: Shall we do Blood Pressure now? How do you know it has changed?**

C131: Because my GP told me it had. It has dropped into a normal range.

C132: 2-3 weeks after the workshop I had my blood pressure done again, and he was very surprised. A few weeks before that I was wired up to a heart monitor. I had two ECGs and they were both abnormal.

**R104: What do you contribute that to?**

C133: Well I'm not taking any medication. He was going to give me medication. He said come back and if it has gone up again then he was going to give me medication. But when I went back after the workshop it was normal so he said there was no need for the medication.

I have started taking hawthorn now as a preventative. But that was more because I had a scare with it.

**R105: What do you feel has lowered your blood pressure?**

C134: The relaxation and meditation.

C135: The whole change in attitude as well. It doesn't take a genius to work out that stress contributes to high blood pressure so if I am not as stressed or angry then it must have an effect on my blood pressure. The stressors are still there but my reaction to them has changed.

**R106: Let's look at sleep. Was that a small change in it?**

C136: Yeah just slight. I think I have a number of physical problems not just psychological problems that impact the sleep. Like the menopause which makes me very hot and messes with my moods. I think sleep problems have been there for so long that I think they will take a while to change. But I have noticed some improvement, I can get to sleep faster. Its waking up in the middle of the night that is a problem. It is taking me less time to fall asleep. I've dropped down the medication for that as well. I had been taking it every night.

C137: I'm doing the relaxation thing. I do those in bed. It just calms me down. Normally I go to bed and my mind is racing and my heart is pounding. Since I've been doing the thing. I even plugged myself into a biofeedback machine just to see the measurable effects of slowing down my breathing.

**R107: So do you think, just to reiterate, you feel you are getting off to sleep more quickly because you are able to quieten your mind down.**

**R108: When you say quickly, how quickly?**

C138: It would normally take between one and two hours, now it is taking me more like half an hour, maybe forty five minutes.

It is an improvement.

**R109: Has it affected the quality of the sleep?**

C139: I don't seem to be having quite as many nightmares and anxiety dreams as I used to.

I've actually had some positive dreams. Where I'm meeting challenges in my dreams. One of my favourite one in where I am being chased. In the dream I've been turning around and facing it. Staring it down and seeing what it is. Like one I had a couple of nights ago when I'm climbing up a waterfall. Even though I keep sliding I keep going back up it, and I'm looking at where I am going, trying to avoid all the water coming down. I just staying focused on where I am going. Which seems like a metaphor for what I learned on the workshop. Not letting the flow of water push me back.

**R110: You've not changed your sleep medication?**

C140: No I am not taking any different stuff. Just lessened the dose.

**R111: Any other causes? Have you exercised more, tiring yourself out?**

C141: No, not yet.

**R112: Alcohol**

C142: Dropped a lot. Pleased with that. It has been a major crutch for a long long time. Far too long. Dropped down as I didn't feel I needed it as much. I was drinking for all the wrong reason. You drink because you want to feel relaxed. I was finding that I can feel relaxed by doing relaxation exercises and having a cup of tea instead. Made me feel nice and relaxed but I don't get the thick head and self-recriminations. I'm not going to beat myself up with guilt for having a cup of tea.

**R113: What about tolerance of your own flaws?**

C143: That is much better. I've probably covered that one when I talked about the thing about the tree.

**R114: Was that when you were talking about a change of perspective?**

C144: No, I think it was self-worth.

I'm not so critical of myself. I'm a bit more compassionate towards myself. I've always been compassionate towards other people but I thought well I'll turn it back on myself.

**R115: How specifically do you know you are more tolerant of yourself?**

C145: I guess I have made mistakes in the last few weeks, like I always do. But I haven't lost my temper with myself. Normally I am the first person to, well probably the only person to berate myself when I make mistakes. I perceive them as mistakes, a lot of people won't even notice there is a problem. I see flaws where people won't see any at all. I'm just learning to accept them. I'm not perfect, nobody is. I don't expect other people to be perfect, so perhaps I should stop expecting myself to be perfect.

**R116: So you don't expect others to, but you expect yourself to?**

C146: Absolutely. I expect other people to not be perfect.

**R117: So is there anything specific that you have noticed that has changed?**

C147: Yeah, particularly proud of a photo shoot. I was very worried about it. In a big venue with a band. I didn't have the right equipment or experience. I thought I'm not going to be able to do this, but I thought what hell I'll give it my best shot. Normally I would avoid something like that because if I can't do it I'm just going to avoid it. But on this occasion I thought well there is a chance I might screw this up I'm just going to give it my best shot. I'm just going to do this to the best of my ability. I'm just got to not be perfectionist any more. Because you know plenty of other people might do the same sort of job as me and I might not do as well as someone else but I've also might do better. I've always been a perfectionist but now I'm thinking while it's a big waste of time to try spending all your time being perfect. It was best just to do the best you can, the full 80% instead of being perfect. It's a bit more reasonable. I did this shoot, it wasn't great I didn't have the right equipment but I give it my best shot and they were pleased with the photographs. So that was the objective. I was more forgiving of that 20%. It was okay. I am I okay with okay instead of perfect.

**R119: So even though you felt you only did an 80%, the client was happy enough?**

C148: The client was happy enough yes

**R120: Any other reason for you pushing yourself into that job?**

C149: No... Fear of not having the money! (Laughs)

C150: It was a case that I had done things in the workshop that I didn't think I was capable of and I thought they would end in disaster. I was afraid of doing this gig, and I just thought well I might fall on my ass but then again I might not. Try to focus on what might go right, instead of what I normally do, which is focus on all the millions of things that might go wrong.

C151: I was pleased with myself even though there was some of the worst photographs I've taken as far as I'm concerned. The smoke machine broke and the lighting was terrible. I was still pleased with the outcome because I didn't run away. And I did get serviceable shots and got paid for them.

## 6. Helpful aspects

**R121: So thinking about the helpful aspects of the therapy, can you sum up what was helpful about the workshop or the exercises that you did?**

C152: To summarise some of the things I've already said, perspective and keeping things in proportion was a really big one. Learning that it's okay to be noticed and in fact you have to make yourself noticed in order to get what you want, to get attention. You have to make yourself noticed in order to make yourself succeed in anything. Like the little woodpecker in that exercise who stuck his head out and called out for what it wanted. And I thought that is something I've never done.

Focusing on where you want to be instead of up close. Again that keeps things in perspective, instead of focusing on great big obstacles. You focus on the path and the destination, instead of the obstacles. You can be more inventive about how to get past the obstacle if you know that there is something beyond the obstacle. So its perception and focus, and not being defeated, and not avoiding things. Learning to tackle things that you believe you can't do. Challenging beliefs was a big thing of the workshop because of the things I was 100% convinced that I couldn't do, and I did them. Learning it is okay to be flawed, and you can still be great even though you are broken. And that's it in a nutshell to use a nice natural metaphor.

**R122: So you've obviously made a number of insights, or shifts in your perspective and how you think about things. So if you think about the exercises themselves. What was it within the exercises that maybe caused the shifts? Was it the exercise itself because you thought about these things in a different way? Or was it the way the exercise was described, or set up, or framed that caused you to approach things differently? Or was it the fact that you just happen to be in a nice wood and felt relaxed? Or was it simply just coincidence? Or the group discussion? Because after all of the exercises we went back and had a group discussion about the exercise you had just done. Did you get insight or inspiration from any, or all of, or none of those things, or was it something else?**

C153: It wasn't that much from the group, there was contribution from the group but that wasn't paramount. It was the exercises themselves and the natural environment because you couldn't have one without the other. You couldn't do "find a tree like me" in a conference room could you. You know, "find a chair like me". A more formal environment doesn't feel safe to me, or comfortable. It was the natural environment that enabled me to feel that relaxed. There was something so wide about the landscape. I think I could never have learned about perspective in a small room. So being in the landscape brought that back home literally and metaphorically. You're sitting at the side of a hill looking out over a huge valley at a mountain, with endless sky above you. It rather gives you a literal interpretation of perspective, you are aware that you are part of a much bigger thing, and you are small but not inconsequential, and you are aware that you are connected to everything. So that makes you feel small but significant. You are an essential part of everything, but that the problems are tiny, Rather than you, if that makes sense.

**R123: So you felt safer, you felt more relaxed, you felt more connected. Because?**

C154: Because it was a non-intimidating environment. A built up environment, or a consultation room, or a hospital consulting room, or conference room wouldn't feel comfortable.

**R124: So that state of mind if you want to call it a state of mind. To be safe, relaxed, connected, non-intimidated. So when you are in that state of mind how does that allow you to explore these problems that you came to work on?**

C155: The because you are not concentrating on things that are distractions. Like feeling uncomfortable. With having been agoraphobic, feeling uncomfortable in a room full of people. I automatically feel uncomfortable and defensive and can't think of anything, other than the fact that that door is closed and I can get out. I'm in a room full of people and the raw very close. He could about 100 people in that environment in the countryside but it wouldn't have felt claustrophobic. You get out of the car when you walk into that wood and it's like an 'ahhh' moment. You just feel the stress and tension falling away. You just couldn't get stressed in an environment like that, unless a tree fell on you. People automatically feel less stressed in that environment. People seem drawn to the countryside and it's why people take their holidays in the country.

**R125: If you are not stressed, and the stresses have just fallen away. What happens when you then think about the problems?**

C156: They just seem to fall into a much smaller place. They seem to be cut down on size. When you're under an endless sky, your problems seem inconsequential. What does it matter, that my computer blew up today. I'll get another one. What does it matter if someone shouted at me? It doesn't matter. Under a big sky in an infinite universe, it doesn't matter and you are reminded that you're in an infinite universe at night time at the campfire you can see all the stars and you just think why the hell am I worrying. When you're lying at home in bed and are looking up at the ceiling and you feel boxed in and all your problems seem closed in with you and everything feels claustrophobic and disproportionate. Because your problems expand to fill the small space you're in. When you're under an endless sky in a wood they could expand forever and get lost.

**R126: If I understand you right. In that environment your problems are smaller and less significant?**

C157: Because you are reminded that they are inconsequential in the bigger scheme of things.

**R127: How does that change what you do with them and think about them?**

C158: Because it cuts them down to size and makes it manageable, they are not so disproportionately huge anymore they are just an obstacle to be stepped over. It's like when you look at it from a buzzard's perspective and think that's actually really tiny and it only looked really big because you are so close up to it and focused on it. If you focus on something further away from and higher up, you can say whatever that is, is really a small problem. It's not so huge; no problem was so big that you can't go around it.

**R128: So the environment itself certainly plays a part in some of the exercises?**

C159: Yes, but I would never make those connections myself. You still get that therapeutic effect of relaxation when you walk in the countryside. But it would never have occurred to me to naturally make those connections to my problems or to look at the tree and seeing it as myself or to actually use what was around me and apply to my own life. It wouldn't have actually occurred to me anyway. However I can get therapy from the nice effect of a walk in the country but it wouldn't have stayed with me. If you have a nice picture of a wood on your wall you can look at and think that's nice but it wouldn't have the same effect. In order to be powerful it needed to be directed. I just needed someone to point out that it can be a metaphor. I wouldn't have known otherwise.

**R129: So it was the metaphorical side of it that I would have set up before each exercise?**

C160: Yes it made me think about it; otherwise the thoughts would not have gone there. I would still have seen the environment, and it would have been a restful one. But it was the exercises that were the things that really worked.

C161: The environment put me into receptive state of mind so the exercises were more powerful. Also when you've got something real in front of you at the tree, it's better than just a worksheet on a table. Or a lot more helpful than self-help books because it was experiential. It was the experiential element that made it more powerful. When I read self-help books my brain just turns off. Just going out and doing things and being shown things practically has really helped.

## **7. Problematic aspects**

### **7a.**

**R130: Was there anything about the workshop of the exercises that were hindering, unhelpful, negative or disappointing for you?**

C162: Erm.. No, not really.

The fact that it rained one day could have been interpreted as a hindrance but you've turned into something which got integrated into the expanded perception thing and that really worked well because we started listening to the sound of the rain on the leaves which turned out to be quite therapeutic and rather nice. It could have been a hindrance but then it wasn't.

**R131: Was anything that was disappointing?**

C163: Nope nothing seems to come to mind at all.

I can't think of anything that was disappointing, well not in the exercises. In my own response to them in the beginning. My initial temper. But no I can't think of anything disappointing.

**R132: You sure?**

C164: Oh the Hill was a bit steep. It might have been nice to have a funicular railway.

Oh..one thing a dog walker they walked past my sit spot, but they didn't even notice me.

**R133: There were a couple of exercises that you did not participate in that involve the blindfold. How do you feel about those now?**

C165: I feel a bit disappointed that I didn't do them. I was kicking myself and filling of a guilty for not doing them. But I was too scared of falling over. I think if I had done the Rope Walk exercise first I might have been more inclined to do the other ones. The Rope Walk was arguably easier. I was glad I did at least one blindfolded exercise.

### **7b.**

**R134: Were the things to do with the workshop which were difficult or painful but still okay perhaps even helpful? what were they?**

C166: I think "find a tree like me" actually had me quite tearful. It was painful because when I realised the tree was actually me, I felt sad for the tree. I'd get choked up now if I talked about. But yes that was painful because I was seeing myself with my flaws, and acknowledging the damage that was there in myself, and the fact it was on its own. It was very supportive of other life, the birds and animals and plants around at. It was in a supporting role, but it was all on its own. And there weren't even any baby beech trees underneath it. Even though there were lots of beech seeds. And I thought, yes, that's me. So moving on... That was the most difficult one but it was also the most transformative one. No pain no gain. You have to challenge yourself and push yourself outside of your comfort zone otherwise you just stagnate.

**R135: So was there anything else?**

C167: The overall thing was the achievement that stays with me was that you can change yourself and be capable of things that you thought you weren't. Just by changing the way you look at stuff and by challenging yourself.

### **7c.**

**R136: Has anything been missing from your treatment?**

C168: If it had been longer. I could have stayed a lot longer.

No it check it all the boxes.

I could have done with more time for journaling.

**R137: Because it was a group thing do you feel that you got enough attention?**

C169: I think it was fine as it was. Sometimes it is useful to hear from other people who are in the same boat as you and struggling with similar things.

**R138: So listening to other people in similar situations. Did that influence any of your positive changes?**

C170: The sound healing meditation that I took from someone else was useful and it tied in with everything else we did.

**R139: In a more general sense?**

C171: The thing about clutter, I'm a terrible hoarder. It was nice to talk to someone else It took away some of the shame I have about clutter. There is someone else there who is an articulate professional person who just has a tendency to hoard stuff. So I not quite as much a weirdo as I thought I was. You can actually be a productive member of society and still hoard stuff.

**8. Suggestions**

**R140: Have you any suggestions, regarding the research or the workshop itself?**

C172: No. I don't think so. I thought it was just right. It was nicely directed. It was kept on track but it didn't feel forced at any point. You didn't feel formal or threatening. The right level of friendliness and humour and it was kept on track. Which is difficult as its hard to keep a timetable in that sort of situation.

**9. Review PQ**

**R141: You filled this in before. If we can just quickly look through the changes. What was the evidence for the changes?**

9a.

**R142: In General, do you think that your ratings mean the same thing now that they did before the therapy?**

C173: (Looks confused) I don't get it.  
No. No change.

**R143: Does the change in these ratings feel accurate?**

C174: Yes.

**R144: Evidence?**

C175: Evidence. I've not lost my temper with myself.

**R145: Difficult relaxing?**

C176: Rating okay. Affected sleep so there is evidence for that.  
I've stopped fighting with my husband so much. He says I'm less argumentative, more chilled and less angry with myself. Less object hurling. Yes it has been remarked upon.

**R146: Give up too easily?**

C177: Definitely dropped. I was the poster child for avoidance. If something worries me I will run away from it. Now I'm not. Refers to rope-walk exercise.

**R147: Anything else you'd like to add?**

C178: It was just a very positive experience. I say experience because it was the experiential nature of it that made it work more than something that was just theory or sitting in a class room. Because it was in a different environment that made it impact more as well. The fact that it wasn't in a therapy room. The fact that it was something that was radically different. It was unusual, embracing and natural. How many people head out to the countryside in droves? You feel better, it is restorative.

**R148: Okay, I think that is all.**

**R149: Thank you very much. I think that is us finished.**

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- Olympus Digital Voice Recorder WS-200S
- Livescribe Echo Smartpen <http://www.livescribe.com/>
- Samsung Galaxy S2 mobile phone + Samsung Voice Recorder app

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- Dragon Naturally Speaking 12 Premium <http://www.nuance.co.uk/>
- Microsoft Word 2010





## Section 2: Completed Helpful Aspects of Therapy Forms

### HAT Form 1 – Expanded Awareness Exercises

#### HELPFUL ASPECTS OF THERAPY FORM (H.A.T.) Roger Elliot (10/93)

Please complete a separate copy of this form for each of today's exercises.

An "event" is something that happened during one of today's exercises that you found **helpful** or **important** for you personally. It might be something you said, did, or realised. Or something that relates to the exercise itself. Or something the workshop facilitator may have said or done.

1. Of the events that occurred during the exercises today, please choose one that you feel was most **helpful** or **important** for you personally and describe it here.

The expanded perception exercise was particularly helpful, whereby we were taught to increase our awareness of our surroundings to take in a wider field of vision, to hear more of the sounds around us, to be aware of how things feel through touch, and even to be aware of scent in our environment. It makes the world bigger and more three-dimensional, and helps make us understand that we are part of it all. I was particularly intrigued by my experience in this exercise where I made the focus of my attention something that was far away in the distance, rather than up close, and found to my surprise that my peripheral vision was clearer, wider and more three-dimensional than if I focus on things which were close up.

2. Please describe what made this event helpful/important and what you got out of it.

For me personally this was very relevant to one of the main issues/problems I came to the workshop to work on: namely anxiety which arises from getting things out of proportion and making difficulties the focus of my attention. For me this exercise was a striking metaphor, much stronger from being experiential, as opposed to just theoretical; something I might read about on a self-help book. It was a clear metaphor for how looking at the wider picture helps "dilute" obsessional thoughts about negative things, and allows you to be aware of other things which in turn give you better sense of perspective about problems in your life. For me, the lesson was that I should try focusing my attention on my objectives and goals, rather than obstacles in my path. A buzzard circling overhead during the exercise reinforce the message that things must be kept in perspective.

3. How helpful was this particular event? Rate it on the following scale. (Put an "X" above the appropriate number; half-point ratings are OK; e.g., 7.5.)

HINDERING <----- Neutral -----> HELPFUL

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	<b>X</b> 9
E	G	M	S		S	M	G	E
X	R	O	L		L	O	R	X
T	E	D	I		I	D	E	T
R	A	E	G		G	E	A	R
E	T	R	H		H	R	T	E
M	L	A	T		T	A	L	M
E	Y	T	L		L	T	Y	E
L		E	Y		Y	E		L
Y								Y

4. About where in the exercise did this event occur?

This was the first exercise of the day.

5. About how long did the event last?

Roughly an hour and a half.

6. Did anything else particularly **helpful** happen during the same exercise?

YES NO

- a. If yes, please rate how helpful this event was:
- 6. Slightly helpful
  - 7. Moderately helpful
  - 8. Greatly helpful
  - 9. Extremely helpful

b. Please describe the event briefly:

When during the expanded awareness exercise, we were compelled to stop, to relax and give into our senses. This gave me a valuable lesson about how much I miss in life simply because I am always rushing around-both literally and in my thoughts. Again, taking time to slow things down and take note of my surroundings makes me aware of things around me which are beautiful and can be helpful and therapeutic.

7. Did anything happen during this exercise which might have been **hindering**?

YES NO

- a. If yes, please rate how hindering the event was:
- 1. Extremely hindering
  - 2. Greatly hindering
  - 3. Moderately hindering
  - 4. Slightly hindering

b. Please describe this event briefly:

During the expanded awareness exercise it started to rain heavily. This could have been a hindrance, but we were encouraged to incorporate the rain fall into the exercise-to notice the sound it made, to feel it on our skin, to smell the difference in the leaves and the earth as it became wet, to see the leaves bouncing as the raindrops hit them. It turned what could have been an unpleasant experience into an adventure of the senses-lesson being that often a negative expectations of things can be wrong, and events which we assume will be difficult can actually turn out to be the opposite-very enjoyable. Again, it is about changing one's perception. What many people might assume to be not very nice was actually a lot of fun!

## HAT Form 2 – Sit-spot (Morning)

### HELPFUL ASPECTS OF THERAPY FORM (H.A.T.) Roger Elliot (10/93)

Please complete a separate copy of this form for each of today's exercises.

An "event" is something that happened during one of today's exercises that you found **helpful** or **important** for you personally. It might be something you said, did, or realised. Or something that relates to the exercise itself. Or something the workshop facilitator may have said or done.

1. Of the events that occurred during the exercises today, please choose one that you feel was most **helpful** or **important** for you personally and describe it here.

The sit spot was where we had to find a place to sit on our own and practice sensory perception Awareness-noticing our surroundings.

2. Please describe what made this event helpful/important and what you got out of it.

This exercise was a challenge because I'm not someone who is used to sitting still and quiet opening my mind. Find a huge holly tree which had grown into the shape which other spacing like a chair. I felt comfortable and protected sitting in the trees centre, but find it very hard to get all my thoughts out of my mind and to sit still. My attention Wandering off, but it was good to be forced into slowing myself down.

3. How helpful was this particular event? Rate it on the following scale. (Put an "X" above the appropriate number; half-point ratings are OK; e.g., 7.5.)

HINDERING <----- Neutral -----> HELPFUL

						X		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
E	G	M	S		S	M	G	E
X	R	O	L		L	O	R	X
T	E	D	I		I	D	E	T
R	A	E	G		G	E	A	R
E	T	R	H		H	R	T	E
M	L	A	T		T	A	L	M
E	Y	T	L		L	T	Y	E
L		E	Y		Y	E		L
Y								Y

4. About where in the exercise did this event occur?

Towards the end

5. About how long did the event last?

30 minutes

6. Did anything else particularly **helpful** happen during the same exercise?

YES NO

- a. If yes, please rate how helpful this event was:
- 6. Slightly helpful
  - 7. Moderately helpful
  - 8. Greatly helpful
  - 9. Extremely helpful

b. Please describe the event briefly:

When I eventually stopped fidgeting and sat still, a Robin flew down and sat on a branch in front of me. If I had still been moving about, he probably wouldn't have come so close. It sort of illustrated that sometimes you have to stop running around or else all your flapping and shouting frightens people away. If you are quiet and calm you are more likely to attract people to you because you are literally more approachable.

7. Did anything happen during this exercise which might have been **hindering**?

YES NO

- a. If yes, please rate how hindering the event was:
- 1. Extremely hindering
  - 2. Greatly hindering
  - 3. Moderately hindering
  - 4. Slightly hindering

b. Please describe this event briefly:

My backside went to sleep because I was sitting awkwardly in the tree, trying to get into a balanced position! I Got Pins and Needles!

## HAT Form 3 – Fox Walking

### HELPFUL ASPECTS OF THERAPY FORM (H.A.T.) Roger Elliot (10/93)

Please complete a separate copy of this form for each of today's exercises.

An "event" is something that happened during one of today's exercises that you found **helpful** or **important** for you personally. It might be something you said, did, or realised. Or something that relates to the exercise itself. Or something the workshop facilitator may have said or done.

1. Of the events that occurred during the exercises today, please choose one that you feel was most **helpful** or **important** for you personally and describe it here.

The fox walking exercise was especially helpful to me in today's session-this was where we were taught to walk barefoot so that we literally connected with the earth, and learned how to feel our way through the landscape using our sense of touch to guide our footsteps.

Ultimately this exercise taught me to trust my instincts: older senses if you like, rather than analysing things and over-thinking things, which always lead to anxiety and fear.

2. Please describe what made this event helpful/important and what you got out of it.

This was helpful on more than one level. Firstly, I have a balance disorder which made this exercise a challenge for me and I was quite anxious about doing it. It was a huge surprise to me to find that I could use my other senses to keep my balance and maintain my direction. As with the sensory expansion exercise, I find that if I behaved like a cat and focused my attention on where I wanted to be, rather than looking at my feet, close-up, I became far more steady. My feet seemed to naturally follow my gaze and in relying on the sense of touch through my feet, and concentrating on where I wanted to go I didn't stumble, but moved remarkably fluidly. It felt very natural.

This exercise is a bit like my experience cycling. If I see an obstacle ahead, then concentrate on it I nearly always end up cycling straight into it, whereas if I look ahead at where I want to be, I usually avoid the obstacle and cycle safely to my goal.

3. How helpful was this particular event? Rate it on the following scale. (Put an "X" above the appropriate number; half-point ratings are OK; e.g., 7.5.)

HINDERING <----- Neutral -----> HELPFUL

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
E	G	M	S		S	M	G	E
X	R	O	L		L	O	R	X
T	E	D	I		I	D	E	T
R	A	E	G		G	E	A	R
E	T	R	H		H	R	T	E
M	L	A	T		T	A	L	M
E	Y	T	L		L	T	Y	E
L		E	Y		Y	E		L
Y								Y

4. About where in the exercise did this event occur?

Halfway through the day

5. About how long did the event last?

Roughly an hour and a half

6. Did anything else particularly **helpful** happen during the same exercise?

YES NO

- a. If yes, please rate how helpful this event was:
- 6. Slightly helpful
  - 7. Moderately helpful
  - 8. Greatly helpful
  - 9. Extremely helpful

b. Please describe the event briefly:

I imagined myself as a cat-putting myself into the mindset of how I thought it Move through the landscape, based on having watched my own cat hunt. They keep their head still and focus entirely on what they are hunting, and the singularity of purpose seems to drive them forward effortlessly, with the bodies following on naturally to take them to their goal.

7. Did anything happen during this exercise which might have been **hindering**?

YES NO

- a. If yes, please rate how hindering the event was:
- 1. Extremely hindering
  - 2. Greatly hindering
  - 3. Moderately hindering
  - 4. Slightly hindering

b. Please describe this event briefly:

I was hindered at first by my own doubts and anxieties about how well I would be able to perform this task, based on concerns about my balance difficulties. The fact that I completed the exercise easily and fluently make me feel literally euphoric-I had triumphed over both mental and physical adversity and been really surprised and made me happy by my success.

The ultimate lesson I learned was that I spend so much time and effort dwelling on perceived obstacles and disabilities in my life that I am blind to the bigger picture. I spend all my time worrying about where I'm stepping so to speak, gazing at my feet, that I lose sight of where I want to be. This shortsighted way of moving through life is very limiting. Also, when if I do encounter a challenge, my myopic and low viewpoint makes the problem/obstacle fill my whole field of vision, making the problem appear larger than it really is, and therefore more frightening and insurmountable.

## HAT Form 4 – Tracking Intentions

### HELPFUL ASPECTS OF THERAPY FORM (H.A.T.) Roger Elliot (10/93)

Please complete a separate copy of this form for each of today's exercises.

An "event" is something that happened during one of today's exercises that you found **helpful** or **important** for you personally. It might be something you said, did, or realised. Or something that relates to the exercise itself. Or something the workshop facilitator may have said or done.

1. Of the events that occurred during the exercises today, please choose one that you feel was most **helpful** or **important** for you personally and describe it here.

We were taught to look at sandy ground for animal tracks and broken pieces of grass etc., indicating where animals had passed.

2. Please describe what made this event helpful/important and what you got out of it.

The tracking exercise was especially helpful in that it taught me to pay attention to detail, as well as patience. I admit that the concept didn't 'click' with me immediately, and I found it hard to spot signs in the sandy ground, but the exercise taught me to persevere and look more closely. It didn't teach me anything in particular the, but it helped prove to myself that I do actually have quite good observational skills.

3. How helpful was this particular event? Rate it on the following scale. (Put an "X" above the appropriate number; half-point ratings are OK; e.g., 7.5.)

HINDERING <----- Neutral -----> HELPFUL

					X				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	
E	G	M	S		S	M	G	E	
X	R	O	L		L	O	R	X	
T	E	D	I		I	D	E	T	
R	A	E	G		G	E	A	R	
E	T	R	H		H	R	T	E	
M	L	A	T		T	A	L	M	
E	Y	T	L		L	T	Y	E	
L		E	Y		Y	E		L	
Y								Y	

4. About where in the exercise did this event occur?

Towards the end after my perseverance paid off (the bit). I wasn't very good at this exercise.

5. About how long did the event last?

30 minutes

6. Did anything else particularly **helpful** happen during the same exercise?

YES NO

- a. If yes, please rate how helpful this event was: \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Slightly helpful  
\_\_\_\_\_ 7. Moderately helpful  
\_\_\_\_\_ 8. Greatly helpful  
\_\_\_\_\_ 9. Extremely helpful

b. Please describe the event briefly:

7. Did anything happen during this exercise which might have been **hindering**?

YES NO

- a. If yes, please rate how hindering the event was: \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Extremely hindering  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Greatly hindering  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Moderately hindering  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Slightly hindering

b. Please describe this event briefly:



## HAT Form 5 – Sit-spot (Evening)

### HELPFUL ASPECTS OF THERAPY FORM (H.A.T.) Roger Elliot (10/93)

Please complete a separate copy of this form for each of today's exercises.

An "event" is something that happened during one of today's exercises that you found **helpful** or **important** for you personally. It might be something you said, did, or realised. Or something that relates to the exercise itself. Or something the workshop facilitator may have said or done.

1. Of the events that occurred during the exercises today, please choose one that you feel was most **helpful** or **important** for you personally and describe it here.

The evening sit spot was helpful. The sun was beginning to set, and it was a lovely warm light everywhere, making the mood seem almost magical golden.

2. Please describe what made this event helpful/important and what you got out of it.

What I liked about this sit spot was that it was the first time all the observation skills we had learned were put into practice. The warm light made everything seem friendly and welcoming an almost magical, which was conducive to the imagination. I found that if I expanded my vision, the trees seemed almost to melt into each other and appeared to form a tunnel in front of me-it was quite trippy-but felt entirely safe and pleasant. I felt like I was completely part of the landscape, rather than a visitor. I felt included.

3. How helpful was this particular event? Rate it on the following scale. (Put an "X" above the appropriate number; half-point ratings are OK; e.g., 7.5.)

HINDERING <----- Neutral -----> HELPFUL

							X		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	
E	G	M	S		S	M	G	E	
X	R	O	L		L	O	R	X	
T	E	D	I		I	D	E	T	
R	A	E	G		G	E	A	R	
E	T	R	H		H	R	T	E	
M	L	A	T		T	A	L	M	
E	Y	T	L		L	T	Y	E	
L		E	Y		Y	E		L	
Y								Y	

4. About where in the exercise did this event occur?

Straight away, from when I first sat down.

5. About how long did the event last?

30 minutes.

6. Did anything else particularly **helpful** happen during the same exercise?

**YES NO**

- a. If yes, please rate how helpful this event was:    \_\_\_ 6. Slightly helpful  
   \_\_\_ 7. Moderately helpful  
   X 8. Greatly helpful  
   \_\_\_ 9. Extremely helpful

b. Please describe the event briefly:

Two dog walkers went past, and though I was sitting near the path, and (I thought) in plain view, they didn't see me. This showed me that I had blended in with my surroundings nicely and reinforced my rather snugly comforting feeling that I was a natural part of the landscape and belong there. I don't normally fit in anywhere and stand out like a sore thumb, so that was a nice feeling to belong.

7. Did anything happen during this exercise which might have been **hindering**?

**YES NO**

- a. If yes, please rate how hindering the event was:    \_\_\_ 1. Extremely hindering  
   \_\_\_ 2. Greatly hindering  
   \_\_\_ 3. Moderately hindering  
   \_\_\_ 4. Slightly hindering

b. Please describe this event briefly:

## HAT Form 6 – Sit-Spot (Morning)

### HELPFUL ASPECTS OF THERAPY FORM (H.A.T.) Roger Elliot (10/93)

Please complete a separate copy of this form for each of today's exercises.

An "event" is something that happened during one of today's exercises that you found **helpful** or **important** for you personally. It might be something you said, did, or realised. Or something that relates to the exercise itself. Or something the workshop facilitator may have said or done.

1. Of the events that occurred during the exercises today, please choose one that you feel was most **helpful** or **important** for you personally and describe it here.

The sit spot/listening exercise, where we found a place we liked and we sat there for a while, atuning ourselves to our surroundings and using the sensory expansion techniques we had learned earlier.

2. Please describe what made this event helpful/important and what you got out of it.

This exercise was important to me on two levels. 1. At first I was disappointed not to be able to hear many sounds, I could hear only one bird. Then, just as I was getting frustrated, more birds arrived, until they were all around me. This taught me that sometimes we need to be patient. To sit quietly and just wait for the things we want to come to us.-Listening helps me not to miss the smaller things in life, whilst jumping up and down and complaining and giving up drives away things which might have been positive for me. 2. Whilst listening to the woodland I heard a small sound which I could not identify. Following it to a hole in a tree I saw a baby woodpecker poke its head out and make the sound. It's small voice carried a surprisingly long way and shortly thereafter a parent woodpecker arrived with food

3. How helpful was this particular event? Rate it on the following scale. (Put an "X" above the appropriate number; half-point ratings are OK; e.g., 7.5.)

HINDERING <----- Neutral -----> HELPFUL

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
E	G	M	S		S	M	G	E
X	R	O	L		L	O	R	X
T	E	D	I		I	D	E	T
R	A	E	G		G	E	A	R
E	T	R	H		H	R	T	E
M	L	A	T		T	A	L	M
E	Y	T	L		L	T	Y	E
L		E	Y		Y	E		L
Y								Y

4. About where in the exercise did this event occur?

Towards the end of the day

5. About how long did the event last?

About 30 minutes

6. Did anything else particularly **helpful** happen during the same exercise?

YES NO

- a. If yes, please rate how helpful this event was:
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Slightly helpful
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Moderately helpful
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Greatly helpful
  - X   9. Extremely helpful

b. Please describe the event briefly:

Seeing the baby woodpecker addressed an anxiety I have about being overlooked or invisible. The baby woodpecker called out clearly for what it wanted, and its parents arrived almost immediately, bringing something to eat. This was a metaphor to me, saying that you have to stick your head out of your shelter and call out clearly, to make yourself noticed and state clearly what you want. If you hide in the tree, no one will know you are there or that you need something. You have to speak up.

7. Did anything happen during this exercise which might have been **hindering**?

YES NO

- a. If yes, please rate how hindering the event was:
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Extremely hindering
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Greatly hindering
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Moderately hindering
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Slightly hindering

b. Please describe this event briefly:

## HAT Form 7 – Rope Walk

### HELPFUL ASPECTS OF THERAPY FORM (H.A.T.) Roger Elliot (10/93)

Please complete a separate copy of this form for each of today's exercises.

An "event" is something that happened during one of today's exercises that you found **helpful** or **important** for you personally. It might be something you said, did, or realised. Or something that relates to the exercise itself. Or something the workshop facilitator may have said or done.

1. Of the events that occurred during the exercises today, please choose one that you feel was most **helpful** or **important** for you personally and describe it here.

The 'Rope Walk' exercise stuck out for me today.

2. Please describe what made this event helpful/important and what you got out of it.

I have Meniere's Disease, which badly affects my balance and co-ordination. I rely heavily on my vision to keep my balance, as my inner ear mechanism cannot be relied upon to keep me upright and orientated. I was forced to sit out the main two blindfold exercises, but I was encouraged by the workshop facilitator to challenge myself and give this exercise a try. I have to admit to being reluctant and fearful (to put it mildly), but Nigel's gentle reassurance gave me the confidence to at least give it a go. The environment of support made me feel comfortable enough to attempt the exercise, and accept failure if it came (which I was sure it would).

The exercise was not at all easy for me, as being deprived of my sense of sight was probably even more frightening for me than the other participants, as I worried at first that I might trip and hurt myself. However, I was aware of Nigel being close at hand, constantly talking me through it, reassuring me that it was perfectly OK to take my time, and that it didn't matter that everyone else had already completed the exercise (which I could ascertain because I could hear them talking ahead of me). Any situations which involve losing my balance are always frightening for me, and therefore something I avoid at all costs, so for me to successfully complete this challenge was a major achievement for me, and I felt very proud of myself.

3. How helpful was this particular event? Rate it on the following scale. (Put an "X" above the appropriate number; half-point ratings are OK; e.g., 7.5.)

HINDERING <----- Neutral -----> HELPFUL

							<b>8</b>	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
E	G	M	S		S	M	G	E
X	R	O	L		L	O	R	X
T	E	D	I		I	D	E	T
R	A	E	G		G	E	A	R
E	T	R	H		H	R	T	E
M	L	A	T		T	A	L	M
E	Y	T	L		L	T	Y	E
L		E	Y		Y	E		L
Y								Y

4. About where in the exercise did this event occur?

At the end when I took off the blindfold and saw how far I had come.

5. About how long did the event last?

10 minutes.

6. Did anything else particularly **helpful** happen during the same exercise?

YES

- a. If yes, please rate how helpful this event was:
- 6. Slightly helpful
  - 7. Moderately helpful
  - 8. Greatly helpful **8**
  - 9. Extremely helpful

b. Please describe the event briefly:

The fact that I completed this exercise by myself without any practical help was immensely significant to me.

7. Did anything happen during this exercise which might have been **hindering**?

YES

- a. If yes, please rate how hindering the event was:
- 1. Extremely hindering
  - 2. Greatly hindering
  - 3. Moderately hindering
  - 4. Slightly hindering **4**

b. Please describe this event briefly:

I was acutely aware of the fact that all the other participants had completed the exercise ahead of me, and in all likelihood were watching me, and that initially made me feel self-conscious, but as I got into the exercise I concentrated so intently on my objective and on listening to Nigel's words that I soon almost forgot that I had an audience.

## HAT Form 8 – Find a Tree Like Me

### HELPFUL ASPECTS OF THERAPY FORM (H.A.T.) Roger Elliot (10/93)

*Please complete a separate copy of this form for each of today's exercises.*

An "event" is something that happened during one of today's exercises that you found **helpful** or **important** for you personally. It might be something you said, did, or realised. Or something that relates to the exercise itself. Or something the workshop facilitator may have said or done.

1. Of the events that occurred during the exercises today, please choose one that you feel was most **helpful** or **important** for you personally and describe it here.

The most powerful exercise of the day for me was the 'Find A Tree Like Me' exercise. We were asked to look for a tree which we were drawn to because we felt it represented us as we are right now. I barely had to look because a tree had already immediately caught my attention as we walked through the wood, and I went straight to it. It was a very old beech, which was battered and broken, and looked as if it had been struck by lightning. It stood alone, with no shelter or support from any other trees or the rest of the landscape. It looked very exposed and lonely. Half the tree had fallen away, presumably in the lightning strike, so it was barely any more than a trunk and one huge branch, fairly low down. The trunk appeared dead, and had begun to decay, but strangely, by complete contrast, the one living branch was thriving and full of green life. Where the low branch was positioned, it reached almost down to the ground, and had created a kind of green cave, providing shelter for smaller plants, although sadly there was no evidence of beech saplings, despite the ground being strewn with beech nuts. Owl pellets were below the tree, and a spotted woodpecker flew out of the remaining branch as I approached. It was clear that the tree provided support and shelter for other living things, even though it was disadvantaged by age and profound damage.

I felt myself identifying with the tree in many ways. Like me, its roots were twisted, and its foundation crumbling. It looked like it might topple in the next high wind. Huge parts of the tree were torn away by storms long past, yet the portion that remained was lush and covered with glossy leaves, and if you approached the tree from a certain angle, you might not have known about the damage, because you couldn't see it when you were ascending the hill. It looked from one angle as if it were a healthy vibrant tree. This struck a chord in me. I go to great lengths to cover up the damage at my roots; my insecure foundations, which always worry me because they are the poor start in life which makes me vulnerable. I try hard to present a lively happy and acceptable face to the world because that's what I want people to see. I thought about the fact that the tree was completely alone, with no beech saplings below it, and this made me think about my own infertility and the sadness and emptiness I feel at never having known the joy of raising children; of knowing that when I die no part of me will continue.

Then I began thinking positively about the tree's duality of existence: the fact that it was a survivor and that **DESPITE** all its damage and rotten roots, it still managed to thrive, and to offer shelter and support to many other living things around it. And although its damage was severe, and much of its exterior gnarled and wrinkled and grey, other parts of it were still attractive and flexible, and had a strong life force contained within it, and evidenced without.

When I approached the tree from a distance, the curious right angle of the remaining branch, dipping to the ground, made a natural picture frame for the valley beyond it, and this drew parallels with my occupation as a photographer: forever positively drawing into a frame the lives of other people, whilst my own story goes largely unrecorded. It had a sort of quiet dignity and although you could see that it suffered, it still had a function, which was to nurture others. I felt a strong sense of empathy with the tree, and compassion for its suffering and fortitude to the point that I was moved to tears when I finally turned away and left it, standing all alone on the hillside against the darkening sky.

2. Please describe what made this event helpful/important and what you got out of it.

I think what I got out of this event was a high degree of insight into my own character and life. Being compelled to project my own traits and history onto something else seemed to give me more freedom than if I was asked to simply describe myself, which I usually find very hard to do. I suppose the tree exercise was a form of detachment, in way there was a sort of get out clause: I could say I was only talking about the tree, not myself, if challenged. The good thing about this exercise was that I was able to draw upon my empathy skills, which are in turn a result of my own life experience, to see things in the tree which are actually facets of my personality and history, for example, it was easy for me to see the damaged roots of the tree as a metaphor for my own rocky start in life. Sometimes it's hard to see yourself honestly, as you really are without some kind of help, and this worked very effectively for me. I think even more than anything, my compassion for the damaged tree helped me recognise and acknowledge areas of my life and personality which have previously been buried or are in need of repair. This was powerful because I am generally not very forgiving of flaws in myself, so the detachment of pretending I was talking about a tree was quite liberating. Similarly the metaphor device of the tree also helped me see some of my strengths, such as looking after the needs of others and providing support for them. In a positive sense, this interpretation of the tree helped me realise that, despite being past my prime, and no longer attractive, I still have the ability to be useful and even to flourish. It wouldn't have occurred to me to identify with a tree under normal circumstances. Usually a walk through the woods is something I appreciate aesthetically, but to project my character traits onto a plant wouldn't have been something I could have thought of!

3. How helpful was this particular event? Rate it on the following scale. (Put an "X" above the appropriate number; half-point ratings are OK; e.g., 7.5.)

HINDERING <----- Neutral -----> HELPFUL

**9**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
E	G	M	S		S	M	G	E
X	R	O	L		L	O	R	X
T	E	D	I		I	D	E	T
R	A	E	G		G	E	A	R
E	T	R	H		H	R	T	E
M	L	A	T		T	A	L	M
E	Y	T	L		L	T	Y	E
L		E	Y		Y	E		L
Y								Y

4. About where in the exercise did this event occur?

At the point I first connected with the tree.

5. About how long did the event last?

Half an hour.

6. Did anything else particularly **helpful** happen during the same exercise?

YES



- a. If yes, please rate how helpful this event was: \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Slightly helpful  
\_\_\_\_\_ 7. Moderately helpful  
\_\_\_\_\_ 8. Greatly helpful  
X 9. Extremely helpful

b. Please describe the event briefly:

The compassion I felt for the tree was, in effect, compassion for myself, and this was an immensely moving experience because I am the last person in the world I have compassion for.

7. Did anything happen during this exercise which might have been **hindering**?

NO

- a. If yes, please rate how hindering the event was: \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Extremely hindering  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Greatly hindering  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Moderately hindering  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Slightly hindering

b. Please describe this event briefly:

# Appendix 6 – Blank Forms

## Helpful Aspects Of Therapy Form (HAT)

### HELPFUL ASPECTS OF THERAPY FORM (H.A.T.) Roger Elliot (10/93)

Please complete a separate copy of this form for each of today's exercises.

An "event" is something that happened during one of today's exercises that you found **helpful** or **important** for you personally. It might be something you said, did, or realised. Or something that relates to the exercise itself. Or something the workshop facilitator may have said or done.

1. Of the events that occurred during the exercises today, please choose one that you feel was most **helpful** or **important** for you personally and describe it here.

2. Please describe what made this event helpful/important and what you got out of it.

3. How helpful was this particular event? Rate it on the following scale. (Put an "X" above the appropriate number; half-point ratings are OK; e.g., 7.5.)

HINDERING <----- Neutral -----> HELPFUL

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---+---	---+---	---+---	---+---	---+---	---+---	---+---	---+---	---+---
E	G	M	S		S	M	G	E
X	R	O	L		L	O	R	X
T	E	D	I		I	D	E	T
R	A	E	G		G	E	A	R
E	T	R	H		H	R	T	E
M	L	A	T		T	A	L	M
E	Y	T	L		L	T	Y	E
L		E	Y		Y	E		L
Y								Y

4. About where in the exercise did this event occur?

5. About how long did the event last?

6. Did anything else particularly **helpful** happen during the same exercise?

YES NO

- a. If yes, please rate how helpful this event was: \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Slightly helpful  
\_\_\_\_\_ 7. Moderately helpful  
\_\_\_\_\_ 8. Greatly helpful  
\_\_\_\_\_ 9. Extremely helpful

b. Please describe the event briefly:

7. Did anything happen during this exercise which might have been **hindering**?

YES NO

- a. If yes, please rate how hindering the event was: \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Extremely hindering  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Greatly hindering  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Moderately hindering  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Slightly hindering

b. Please describe this event briefly:

## Personal Questionnaire Form (PQ)

PERSONAL QUESTIONNAIRE Client ID \_\_\_\_\_ Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: Please complete before each session. Rate each of the following problems according to how much it has bothered you during the past seven days, including today.

	Not At All	Ver y Littl e	Littl e	Mod erate ly	Consi derabl y	Very Consi derabl y	Maxim um Possibl e
1.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Additional Problems: 11.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

---

## Personal Questionnaire Duration Form (PQ)

Personal Questionnaire Duration Form

Client ID \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date:

Instructions: Please rate how long each of your problems has bothered you at roughly the same level (or higher) as it does now.

	less than 1 month	1 - 5 months	6 - 11 months	1 - 2 years	3 - 5 years	6 - 10 years	more than 10 years
1.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Simplified Personal Questionnaire Procedure

Simplified Personal Questionnaire Procedure (9/99)  
Robert Elliott, Carol Mack & David A. Shapiro  
University of Toledo

The Personal Questionnaire (PQ) is an expanded target complaint measure which is individualized for each client. It is generated from the PQ Problem Description Form, completed by the client during the screening process. It intended to be a list of problems that the client wishes to work on in therapy, stated in the client's own words.

### Materials

- 4" x 6" Index Cards
- Blank PQ Form (for writing in items)
- Problem Description Form (completed)

### Procedure

1. Generating Items. The items generated for the PQ should be the most important in the client's view. However, an attempt should be made to include one or two problems from each of the following areas:

- Symptoms
- Mood
- Specific performance/activity (e.g., work)
- Relationships
- Self-esteem

This means that if the client does not list a problem in a particular area, the interviewer should ask the client if s/he has any difficulties in that area that s/he wants to work on in therapy. If, however, the client does not wish to have an item for this area, the researcher does not insist on it.

This part of the procedure should be thought of as a brainstorming session, generating as many potential items as possible (around 15 is preferable). If the client has difficulty coming up with 10 problems, the interviewer can use other screening measures as sources of possible problems. For example, if the client has completed the SCL-90-R, the interviewer can ask the client about items with "3" or "4" ratings.

2. Refining the PQ items. Next, the interviewer helps the client to clarify his/her items and, if necessary, to rephrase the goals into problems. If necessary, the number of items is reduced to around 10.

2a. In this part of the procedure, the interviewer begins by writing each problem onto a separate index card, revising it in the process. Refining PQ items is not a mechanical procedure, but requires discussion with the client to make sure that the PQ reflects his/her chief concerns. It takes careful, patient communication to make sure that the PQ items truly reflect the client's experience of what is problematic.

PQ items should be present problems or difficulties, and should be worded "I feel," "I

am," "I can't," "My thinking," and so on. It is useful to think of the list as things the client wants to change through therapy. A good PQ item has the following characteristics:

- It reflects an area of difficulty, rather than a goal (e.g., "I am too shy" rather than "I want to be more outgoing").
- It is something that the client wants to work on in therapy.
- It refers to a specific problem; that is, general, vague problems are specified.
  - It refers to a single problem; that is, items referring to multiple problems (e.g., "I'm uncomfortable around other people and have trouble talking about myself.") are divided up into multiple items.
- It is in the client's own words, not the interviewer's.
- It is not redundant with another PQ item.

2b. After the interviewer writes down the items, s/he then asks the client if anything has been left out, adding further items as needed, until the client feels that the list is complete.

2c. The interviewer next reviews the items with the client, asking the client to revise or confirm them. If the client has generated more than 10 items, the interviewer asks the client to delete or combine repetitive items. If there are still more than 10 items, the interviewer asks the client if s/he wants to drop any. The interview should not force the client to generate exactly 10 items; but try to obtain 8-12 items where possible.

3. Prioritizing the items. Next, the interviewer asks the client to sort the index cards into order, with the most important concern first, the next most important second, etc. The rank order of the item is written on the card.

4. Rating the PQ. After prioritizing, the interviewer gives the client a blank PQ form and the rank-ordered index cards, and asks the client to use the blank form to rate how much each problem has bothered him/her during the past week. These ratings become the client's initial baseline score for the PQ.

4a. Optional: Duration ratings. In addition, at this first administration of the PQ, the interviewer may want to find out how long each problem has bothered the client at roughly the same level or higher as it does now, using the Personal Questionnaire Duration Form. This can be useful for establishing a retrospective baseline for the PQ.

5. Prepare the PQ. Finally, the interviewer types or writes the PQ items onto a blank PQ form, making at least 10 copies for future use. In doing so, it is a good idea to leave 2 spaces blank for the client to add more items later, in case his/her problems shift over time.

## Semi-Structured Change Interview Questions

### General Questions:

**1a. What medication on you currently on?** (researcher records on form, including dose, how long,

last adjustment, herbal remedies)

**1b. Review Release of Recordings form**

**1c. What has therapy been like for you so far? How has it felt to be in therapy?**

**1d. How are you doing now in general?**

### 2. Self-Description:

**2a. How would you describe yourself?** (If role, describe what kind of \_\_\_\_? If brief/general, can

you give me an example? For more: How else would you describe yourself?)

**2b. How would others who know you well describe you?** (How else?)

**2c. If you could change something about yourself, what would it be?**

### 3. Changes:

**3a. What changes, if any, have you noticed in yourself since therapy started?** (For example, Are you doing, feeling, or thinking differently from the way you did before? What specific ideas, if any, have you gotten from therapy so far, including ideas about yourself or other people? Have any changes been brought to your attention by other people?) [*Interviewer: Jot changes down for later.*]

**3b. Has anything changed for the worse for you since therapy started?**

**3c. Is there anything that you wanted to change that hasn't since since therapy started?**

Client Change Interview, p. 2

**4. Change Ratings:** (Go through each change and rate it on the following three three scales:)

**4a. For each change, please rate how much you expected it vs. were surprised by it? (Use this rating scale:)**

(1) Very much expected it

(2) Somewhat expected it

(3) Neither expected nor surprised by the change

(4) Somewhat surprised by it

(5) Very much surprised by it

**4b. For each change, please rate how likely you think it would have been if you hadn't been in**

**therapy? (Use this rating scale:)**

(1) Very unlikely without therapy (clearly would not have happened)

(2) Somewhat unlikely without therapy (probably would not have happened)

(3) Neither likely nor unlikely (no way of telling)

(4) Somewhat likely without therapy (probably would have happened)

(5) Very likely without therapy (clearly would have happened anyway)

**4c. How important or significant to you personally do you consider this change to be? (Use this rating scale:)**

(1) Not at all important

(2) Slightly important

(3) Moderately important

(4) Very important

(5) Extremely important

**5. Attributions: In general, what do you think has caused these various changes? In other**



**words, what do you think might have brought them about?** (Including things both outside of therapy and in therapy)

**6. Helpful Aspects: Can you sum up what has been helpful about your therapy so far? Please give examples.** (For example, general aspects, specific events)

**7. Problematic Aspects:**

**7a. What kinds of things about the therapy have been hindering, unhelpful, negative or disappointing for you?** (For example, general aspects, specific events)

**7b. Were there things in the therapy which were difficult or painful but still OK or perhaps helpful? What were they?**

**7c. Has anything been missing from your treatment?** (What would make/have made your therapy more effective or helpful?)

**8. Suggestions . Do you have any suggestions for us, regarding the research or the therapy? Do you have anything else that you want to tell me?**

Client Change Interview, p. 3

**9. Review Personal Questionnaire (PQ)**

Instructions: Compare pre-therapy (screening) and post-therapy to current PQ ratings with client, noting number of points changed for each problem. Tell client: We are trying to understand how clients use the PQ, and what their ratings mean.

**9a. In general, do you think that your ratings mean the same thing now that they did before therapy? If not, how has their meaning changed?** (Sometimes clients change how they use the PQ rating scale; did that happen for you?)

**9b. Identify each problem that has changed 2+ points:**

(1) Compare each PQ problem change (2+ points) to the changes listed earlier in the interview.

(2) If the PQ problem change is not covered on the change list, ask: **Do you want to add this change to the list that you gave me earlier?**

•If yes -> go back to question 5 and obtain change ratings for this change.

•If no -> go on:

(3) For each PQ problem change (2+ points), ask: **Tell me about this change: What do you think it means? Do you feel that this change in PQ ratings is accurate?**

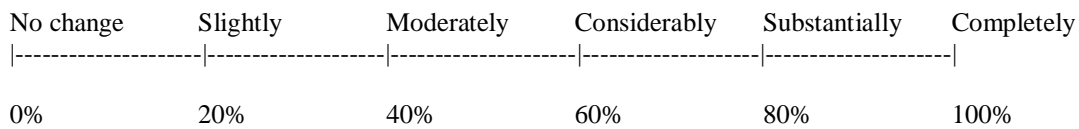
**10. Review Pre-therapy Self-description** (only if pre-treatment self-description has been obtained)

•Show client self-description summary from screening; ask:

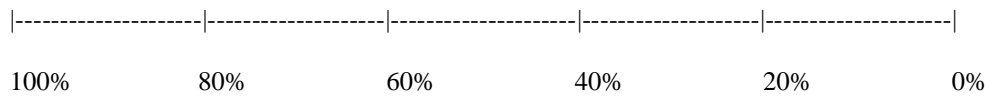
•**How does this compare with how you see yourself now?** (What is similar? What is different? How do you understand these similarities and differences?)

## Blank Judge Opinion Form

1a. To what extent did the client change over the course of the natural-awareness workshop?

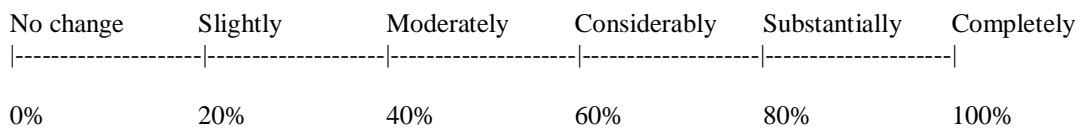


1b. How certain are you?

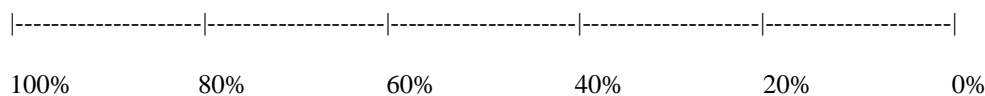


1c. What evidence presented in the affirmative and sceptic cases mattered most to you in reaching this conclusion?  
How did you make use of this evidence?

2a. To what extent is this change due to the natural-awareness exercises?



2b. How certain are you?



2c. What evidence presented in the affirmative and sceptic cases mattered most to you in reaching this conclusion?  
How did you make use of this evidence?

3a. What therapy processes do you feel were helpful to the client?

3b. Which characteristics and/or personal resources of the client do you feel enabled her to make best use of her therapy?

## Appendix 7 - General Consent Form and Right to Withdraw

**Title of Project:**

The Effectiveness of Nature-Awareness Exercises as a Therapeutic Intervention for Anxiety: A Hermeneutic Single-Case Efficacy Design Study

**Name of Researcher:**

Nigel Magowan

**Please tick box**

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
- 3. I agree to take part in the above study.
- 4. I understand that the researcher may wish to publish this study and any results found, for which I give my permission.

.....  
Name

.....  
Date

.....  
Signature

.....  
Name of person taking consent (if different from researcher)

.....  
Date

.....  
Signature

.....  
Researcher

.....  
Date

.....  
Signature

## Appendix 8 - Consent Form Involving Use of Psychotherapist's Case Notes

**Title of Project:**

The Effectiveness of Nature-Awareness Exercises as a Therapeutic Intervention for Anxiety: A Hermeneutic Single-Case Efficacy Design Study

**Name of Researcher:**

Nigel Magowan

**Please tick box**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, without my psychotherapeutic care or legal rights being affected.
3. I understand that anonymised sections of any of my psychotherapeutic case notes may be looked at by responsible individuals from Beeleaf Institute or from regulatory authorities where it is relevant to my taking part in research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my anonymised records.
4. I agree to take part in the above study.
5. I understand that the follow-up interview will be recorded and that I may withdraw my consent for the recording at any time without reason. I give my permission for the follow-up interview to be recorded.
6. I understand that the anonymised follow-up interview transcript and anonymised sections of the transcript may appear in the final study report. I have been made aware that I will be able to review the anonymised transcript and a draft report, and I will be able to suggest changes or deletions if necessary to maintain my anonymity. I give my permission for an anonymised interview transcript and anonymised sections of the transcript to be used by the researcher.

.....  
Name

.....  
Date

.....  
Signature

## Appendix 9 - Participant Letter

Dear .....

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project, which I am conducting as part of a UKCP Accredited qualifying course in Contemporary Psychotherapy at BeeLeaf Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy.

I enclose an information sheet, which explains the title and aims of the project.

If you are willing to take part in the study you would be required to attend a weekend ecotherapy workshop in September and also be interviewed at few weeks later. The interview would take no longer than 90 minutes. Anything you say would be totally confidential and any notes and recordings made as a result of the interview, or during the workshop would be destroyed afterwards. The interview would take place in your own home at a time that is convenient to yourself. A report will be written of the findings and your name and other identifying details will be changed so that you cannot be identified.

If you feel that you would like to take part please indicate on the attached sheet and return to me by email. If you would prefer not to be involved, please delete as appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

Nigel Magowan

## Appendix 10 - Participant Information Sheet

### 1. Study Title

The Effectiveness of Nature-Awareness Exercises as a Therapeutic Intervention for Anxiety: A Hermeneutic Single-Case Efficacy Design Study

### 2. Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with your friends/family. Do not hesitate to ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like further information. This will help you to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

### 3. What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study will be to determine if nature-awareness exercises are effective when used as a therapeutic intervention in the treatment of anxiety. The research methodology that will be used is called Hermeneutic Single Case Efficacy Design (HSCED). HSCED was chosen as it aims to answer several questions that the researcher is interested in: Did the participant change? Did the change they experienced occur as a result of the nature-awareness exercises? Is there a plausible link between what happened in the nature-awareness exercises and the specific changes?

There has been a growth of interest in researching various nature-based therapies, with positive results being reported. Whilst there has been some research on the use of nature-awareness as a treatment for addiction, there has been no formal research specifically exploring the effectiveness of nature-awareness exercises as a treatment for anxiety.

It is hoped that the study will be a useful addition to both nature-awareness research and also to the wider ecotherapy and psychotherapy fields. It is hoped that this research will add further validity to the research already carried out in this field, and stimulate further research into Natural Awareness therapy itself. The study will add credibility to Natural Awareness as a viable therapeutic tool and also contribute to the wider growing field of nature-based therapies.

It is hoped that the study will be of benefit to a number of people, groups and organisations. It will primarily help those suffering from anxiety and those therapists responsible for treating them by giving alternative treatment options. In the long term nature-based therapies are cheaper than drugs so there may be financial incentives for organisations such as the NHS to integrate them into its treatment programmes.

The entire study will last 7 months, and will end on the 31st December 2012. Participation will require the attendance of a residential workshop in North Wales lasting 48 hours, followed by a 90 minute interview approximately 4 weeks after the workshop. The workshop will be held on the [REDACTED] 2012.

### 4. Why have I been chosen?

There are several reasons why you have been chosen to participate in the research. You have

indicated previously that you suffer from anxiety, and that you also have an interest in or some previous experience of nature-based therapies. You have also previously expressed an interest in volunteering for the research.

## **5. Do I have to take part?**

It is completely voluntary and it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. This will not affect the standard of care you receive.

## **6. What will happen to me if I take part?**

The chosen research methodology chosen uses both quantitative and qualitative data which will be collected at the points below:

### Before the workshop

A short pre-workshop telephone call to gather background information about your anxiety, and your personal history. This will be at time that is convenient to you.

### Start of the workshop

At the beginning of the workshop before the other participants arrive, we will need to spend up to an hour creating a list of specific ways that the anxiety causes problems for you. Followed by scoring of some measures designed to rate the level of your anxiety before you take part in any of the nature-awareness exercises.

### End of each day of the workshop

At the end of each day when the exercises are complete and you have time to yourself, you will need to briefly complete a short form for each of the exercises we did that day, describing what you found helpful or hindering.

### End of the workshop

At the end of the workshop when the other participants have gone you will need to re-score the same measures we used at the start of the workshop.

### 4 Week follow-up interview

Approximately 4 weeks after the workshop a follow up semi-structured interview of up to 90 minutes in duration will be required. This will be arranged at time and location that is convenient to you. As part of this interview we will discuss your experiences of the nature-awareness exercises, any changes you might have made, and again re-score the same measures that you scored at the start and end of the workshop.

The data collection has been designed to minimise interference with the nature-awareness exercises and the workshop in general. So once the workshop starts you will be able to engage fully in the activities and gain the same benefits as the other non-research participants of the workshop.

## **7. What do I have to do?**

Participation will require the attendance of a residential workshop in North Wales on the [REDACTED] 2012. The workshop will last a total of 48 hours.

Most workshop participants will camp, and stay the entire weekend in the private-woodland in which the workshop takes place. If you would prefer not to camp, there are a couple of B&B's a short drive away.

Approximately 4 weeks after the workshop, a follow up interview will take place lasting 90 minutes. The interview will take place at a time and location convenient to you.

### **8. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

For you personally there may be possible therapeutic benefits as a result of participating in the workshop. You will also have the opportunity to relax and wild camp in private woodland in North Wales.

Some of the wider benefits will hopefully be to inform the general counselling and psychotherapy community of the benefits of nature-awareness exercises and nature-based therapies in general. Anxiety disorders are very common in our society and it is hoped that the research will increase the range and flexibility of treatment available. This could mean more sufferers of anxiety will find a resolution to their problems.

### **9. What are the possible risks?**

The activities during the workshop are low risk, and involve no more danger than a walk in the countryside. Every attempt is made to minimize potential harm; however the exercises do take place outdoors in a woodland environment which does contain some potential natural hazards. There is a risk of slipping or tripping on wet or uneven ground and tree roots. There may be risk of injury from walking into low lying branches, or being hit by falling deadwood. Some may be at risk of allergic reactions to stinging insects or plants. There is a risk of burns from the camp fire and cooking equipment. In the event of extreme weather the workshop will be cancelled for your safety.

A full risk assessment of the woodland is available and will be sent with the workshop joining pack. At the beginning of the workshop participants will again be briefed on the potential risks, relevant safety equipment and emergency procedures.

Each participant is required to sign terms and conditions before attending any outdoor workshop. A recommended kit list of suitable clothing and equipment will be sent with the workshop joining instructions (normal camping equipment and outdoor clothing will usually be more than adequate).

### **10. Reimbursements**

You will not be provided any financial incentive to take part in the research. However your food and travel expenses for the weekend will be reimbursed, and there will be no charge for the workshop itself.

### **11. What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The study is being carried out as a required part of an Advance Diploma in Contemporary Psychotherapy. The results of this study will be included as part of the researchers dissertation for the advanced diploma. To ensure your confidentiality your name and any other identifying information will be disguised. Any notes made during the workshop, and the follow-up interview recordings will be destroyed. You will have an opportunity to read through the draft document and discuss changes or deletions to ensure your anonymity. A



copy of the final dissertation can be emailed or posted to you if you would like a copy. The results may be published online or in hard copy; details of which can be made available to you.

## **12. Contact for further information**

The research is being carried out by Nigel Magowan. If you have any concerns or queries about the research you may contact Nigel directly either by telephone at 0161 881 4333, or by email at [nigel@innerchanges.co.uk](mailto:nigel@innerchanges.co.uk)

**(A copy of this information sheet and their signed consent form will be given to each participant.)**