

THEORY OF CHANGE

Our therapeutic approach for young people

Using nature as our co-therapist, Human Nature re-connects disengaged and vulnerable young people with mental wellness through a suite of nature-based, strengths-based, empowering, personalised, safe, responsive and trauma-informed programs and professional mental health services.

The principles of our approach

- We always put young people and wellness first, focusing on engagement, physical, psychological and emotional safety, and youth participation.
- We value and nurture nature as a powerful, co-therapist and healing partner in all that we do.
- We challenge conventional thinking about and approaches to youth mental health and wellness.
- We are continually learning through consultation and education, and are open to opportunities and challenges with a growth mindset.
- We openly share our knowledge to nurture the growth of our sector through networks, partnerships and thought leadership.

Our therapeutic model

- Is intentional, sequential and incorporates a range of evidence informed therapeutic tools we have for nurturing young peoples wellbeing.
- Acknowledges that wellness and wellbeing encompass a range of interconnected elements - mental, social, spiritual, cultural, community.
- Emphasises the importance of nature as a healing modality, and relationships to therapeutic staff, peers and self.
- Is strength-based, youth centred, accessible, sensory, grounded in an understanding of and response to the impact of trauma.
- Creates a safe place, a safe culture, a sense of belonging, and a connected community of mental and social support.
- Focuses on a therapeutic alliance with our highly trained compassionate team of therapists, continuity of support and meeting young people where they are at.
- Intentionally builds and nurtures our highly qualified, skilled, observant, adaptive, flexible and innovative team, growing and sustaining their therapeutic capacity.

Human Nature incorporates five broad interconnected mechanisms of change towards wellbeing for participants:

- 1 Safe and supportive small groups (social wellbeing).
- 2 Connection with country, culture and identity (spiritual wellbeing).
- 3 Contact with nature and natural environments as a pathway that becomes the young person's ally.
- 4 Supporting wellness and lifelong strength to ask for help and encouragement (ecological wellbeing).
- 5 Outdoor / physical activity and use of adventure (physical wellbeing).

RECRE8

Group adventure-based therapeutic experiences involving canoeing, sailing, hiking and other activities.

- One - two day experiences.
- 14 day expedition (2 day prep camp, 10 day expedition plus 2 day reunion).
- Develops social/emotional competencies and coping skills through group-based adventure experiences facilitated by a team of therapists and adventure professionals.

ACTIV8

1:1 and small group outreach therapeutic counselling and support, taking place in a nature-based/ non clinical setting.

- Team of registered mental health professional (psychologist or social worker) plus therapeutic mentor/ youth worker working to build trust and open the way for deeper conversations.
- Weekly/ fortnightly sessions for up to 12 months.

ELEV8

Support, mentoring and leadership for past participants to strengthen ongoing wellbeing, growth, healing and connections to self and others

- Young adults ready to build their life skills and give back to their peers and community.
- Small group activities, leadership, mentoring and skills development in outdoor settings.

EDUC8

Sector-wide thought leadership, knowledge sharing, communication, education, training, advocacy and partnerships.

- Networking and partnerships.
- Sector recognition of gaps in current service offerings.
- Trauma-informed mindsets integrated into organisations and settings.

Outcomes and impact

Our programs aim to strengthen a young person's capacity to regulate emotions, enhance alternatives to risk-taking behaviours, build resilience for difficult situations and adversities, and promote supportive social environments and networks. Our goal is to empower them to navigate life's challenges and to avoid the need for more extreme interventions further on in their lives.

As a result young people develop an embedded and lifelong desire to grow and change through nature, connect with their own inner strengths, positively engage in therapeutic support, nourish themselves and their community, and build a sense of control and empowerment to become resilient young adults.