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Growing together

A practice guide to promoting social inclusion through gardening and horticulture

Jo Sempik, Jo Aldridge and Saul Becker

Horticulture and gardening activity is used as a therapy in the UK for growing numbers of vulnerable people, including those with mental health problems, learning difficulties and other health and social problems. However, until now little published work has focused on how horticulture and gardening can help to promote social inclusion for these vulnerable groups. This guide looks at the ways in which social and therapeutic horticulture (STH) projects can help foster independence, build self esteem and confidence and provide training and employment opportunities for people with health or social problems.

This guide will be useful for anyone thinking about setting up STH services for vulnerable groups or for those already providing STH support but who want to understand further the nature and extent of provision currently available in the UK.

The Growing Together project is a partnership between Loughborough University and Thrive and has been funded by the Big Lottery Fund. This guide complements a research study, *Health, well-being and social inclusion: Therapeutic horticulture in the UK*, which is also available from The Policy Press (SEE BELOW FOR DETAILS).

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Health, well-being and social inclusion

Therapeutic horticulture in the UK

Jo Sempik, Jo Aldridge and Saul Becker

Although there is growing interest among health and social care professionals in the social and therapeutic value of horticulture, there is little evidence that demonstrates the range of outcomes for vulnerable groups, including those with learning difficulties and mental health problems. This report addresses this gap in knowledge and presents the findings of the Growing Together project, the first detailed study of horticulture and gardening projects across the UK.

The report is aimed at policy makers, professionals, researchers and students in the fields of health and social care and occupational and horticultural therapy who are hungry for hard evidence in this new field, as well as anyone interested in addressing the needs of vulnerable and socially excluded adults.

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