



## Social Prescriptions and Sit-spots

Boston University defines social wellbeing as “building and maintaining healthy relationships and having meaningful, authentic interactions with others.” What if “others” includes the “more-than-human” world? What if we intentionally spent time in nature to develop, maintain and nourish a relationship with the natural world, a relationship that is meaningful and authentic? Many of us feel lonely when we are alone. But if we in fact built a healthy relationship with the natural world around us, we might feel less lonely, even in the absence of other humans. One of the most accessible ways to build a relationship with nature is to practice sitspot.

According to The Association of Nature & Forest Therapy Guides and Programs, sitspot is a “practice steeped in the art of being present, a gentle invitation to immerse oneself in the embrace of nature” ...often “for a stretch of twenty minutes or so, an act of patience that allows the untamed inhabitants around us to grow comfortable with our quiet presence and return to their natural rhythm.” In the language of nature therapy, we extend an invitation for you to find a place, in nature, where you feel safe and comfortable, to routinely sit and be still for a few minutes a day, and to notice the world around you, with no expectations.

Loneliness can be seen on its own or as a symptom of mental illness, such as depression. According to Menhas et. al.'s [Does nature-based social prescription improve mental health outcomes? A systematic review and meta-analysis](#), "incorporating nature-based social prescription interventions into mental healthcare plans can effectively complement traditional therapies and improve mental health outcomes."

Of the 1955 providers registered with PRA's nature prescribing platform, 1109 (56% of all registered providers) are in specialties that provide the bulk of mental healthcare. This includes:

- 56 who self-identified as within the field of psychology,
- 68 in psychiatry,
- 161 in mental/behavioral health,
- 49 in lifestyle medicine,
- 476 in family medicine,
- 197 in pediatrics,
- and 102 in internal medicine.

All of these providers could routinely incorporate nature-based social prescriptions into their mental healthcare plans.

With increasing evidence to support incorporating nature-based interventions into our clinical routine and as part of our toolkit, we invite and encourage you to [use our resources and prescription platform](#) to provide the best care for your patients. We know from providers who have used our platform to issue nature prescriptions, that the experience for both provider and patient have been overall positive.

**Visit Park Rx America**

**PRA Spotlight**



**Angelique Onorati**



### *PRA Nature Rep*

*I spontaneously discovered Park Rx America while browsing for climbing gear at REI in Boston. As someone who has long aspired to become a pediatrician and was preparing for medical school at the time, I was immediately intrigued by the idea of prescribing nature as a form of care. I reached out to Dr. Zarr and soon became a volunteer “nature rep,” piloting a model to explore whether a sustained presence within healthcare spaces could encourage more providers to prescribe time in nature.*

*Over the past year, I’ve collaborated with a behavioral health clinic in Rhode Island and a restorative justice organization in Boston, offering nature-immersive experiences, indoor plants, and nature photography. It was insightful to listen to and partner with healthcare providers and community leaders to explore how nature prescriptions could be meaningfully integrated into patient care and community engagement. One of the most impactful moments for me was hearing formerly incarcerated individuals describe how deeply nature has affected them—especially those who had limited or no access to natural environments during their youth or as adults. Their stories made me reflect on how a lack of regular exposure to nature might lead to sensory deprivation effects in young people and emerging adults.*

*This reflection has continued to guide me. During Brown University’s Nature and Health Symposium, I was especially drawn to discussions about improving equitable access and safety in nature spaces. What I love most about nature prescriptions is that they invite patients to participate in shaping their own healing—unlike standard medications. When discussing nature prescriptions with patients, it is critical that individuals feel physically, emotionally, and mentally comfortable in the nature space. The truth is that not everyone feels safe in nature, so it is really important to me to explore and advocate for equitable nature access.*

*Now, as a first-year medical student, I’m excited to carry forward this perspective by incorporating Park Rx America’s tools and philosophy to center*

*nature in both my personal wellness and future pediatric practice.*

- Angelique

## Nature and Health Alliance (NHA) Inaugural Conference 2025



The first ever [NHA conference](#) was held April 27-29th, 2025 in Houston Texas. The conference itself was co-hosted by [NHA](#) and the [Center for Health and Nature](#). There were 155 attendees for a 3-day conference, and many opportunities for researchers, practitioners and advocates to share ideas and collaboratively develop proposals to advance both human and planetary health.

For those of you unable to attend, please stay tuned for [upcoming events](#). If you haven't already become a member of NHA, please do so [here](#).

## Wellness Program at El Centro de Corazón





# El Centro de Corazón

## *Quality Health Care*

PRA is continuing to partner with El Centro de Corazón, a community health center in Houston's East End District, thanks to a grant from the Texas A&M Forest Service!

Our project title is: **"Reciprocal ecological and human health at El Centro de Corazón: Impacting human and forest health through tree planting/tending, forest therapy experiences and nature prescriptions."**

The proposal's overall goal is to build on our previous relationship by incorporating nature-based activities permanently into El Centro's staff wellness program. We plan to:

1. Develop and institutionalize tree-centered nature-based experiences as part of El Centro's Staff Wellness Program for approximately 90 un-duplicated employees, including healthcare providers, medical assistants, receptionists, and administrative staff.
2. Promote general wellness, decrease burnout, and improve mental health among all staff, and measure those changes through PRA's survey research tool.
3. Increase urban tree canopy and diversity on El Centro's Health Center campuses to promote reciprocal ecological and human health restoration, and more specifically to reduce air pollution, mitigate heat island effects, promote physical activity, and improve staff mental health.
4. Utilize existing tools, such as Healthy Trees, Healthy Lives; Healthy Trees, Healthy Cities, and i-Tree to create an innovative model of care that supports reciprocal ecological and human health restoration, and lastly to
5. Promote and encourage all El Centro staff to engage in tree-centered nature experiences, by educating and training staff to issue nature prescriptions amongst each other, using PRA's nature prescribing platform and toolkits.

# Upcoming Event



OCTOBER 2025

## Nature as Medicine Practitioner and Guide Training and Certification

*46 hours AMA Category I CME (or equivalent)  
Continuing Education Credits*

Please consider joining Dr. Susan Abookire for her next Nature as Medicine Practitioner Training Program for healthcare professionals, starting October 2025. Offered jointly with the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy, become trained and certified as a Forest Therapy Guide, as well as a Nature as Medicine Practitioner.

This program, open to all licensed healthcare professionals, is accredited by the Massachusetts General Brigham and offers *46 hours* of continuing education credits. We begin with a 3-day immersion in the beautiful Rocky Mountains of Colorado, followed by a 6 month on online community of learning and collaboration.

[Learn more](#)

[Learn More for Certified Forest  
Therapy Guides](#)

## We want to hear from you!

With over 1,800 registered providers across the country, we know there are a lot of stories out there of prescribing nature for the first time and patient successes. Take a moment to [Share Your Story](#) and get a chance to be showcased on our [Provider Spotlight](#) page.

## Share Your Story

PRA is grateful for your donation to help us keep our website and platform accessible to all!

## Support our Work

Park Rx America is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.  
All donations are tax deductible. Our EIN is **82-0856734**.

*Keeping in mind the secondary trauma of caring for others, please take the time you need to recover and consider a dose of nature for yourself.*

**Robert Zarr, MD, MPH**

*Founder & Medical Director*

**Stacy Beller Stryer, MD**

*Associate Medical Director*

