

# INTRODUCTION

Green Prescriptions are revolutionizing healthcare worldwide, and now they're making a significant impact in Canada. Green prescriptions are tailored plans that prescribe time spent in nature or engaging in outdoor activities as a means of promoting optimal health and wellbeing, especially for individuals living with mental health conditions like anxiety and depression.

# OBJECTIVES

The South Georgian Bay Community Health Centre (SGBCHC) and community partners teamed up to launch the Green Prescription pilot project. Made possible by the generous funding from the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital Foundation's Wellness Innovation Fund, the primary objective was to enhance the health and wellbeing of individuals living in South Georgian Bay by encouraging physical activity and reconnecting them with the healing power of nature.

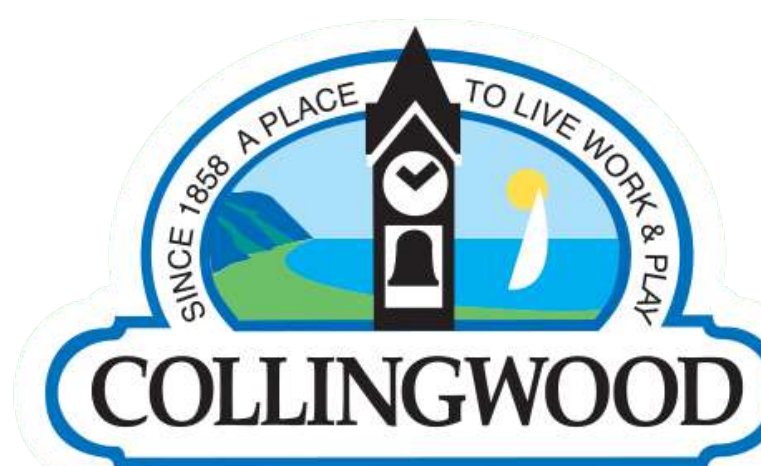
# METHOD

The Green Rx pilot project aimed to improve the mental health and wellbeing of individuals in the South Georgian Bay region. Over the course of eight months, healthcare providers at the SGBCHC prescribed nature-based activities to a random, non-biased sample of 40 participants who were identified as experiencing depression and anxiety.

Participants received free Ontario Parks passes, community trail maps, and access to the SGBCHC's free community nature programs. The project funding facilitated the provision of transit passes for those in need and supplementary equipment whenever required. Client referrals were made through the local electronic medical record (EMR) system, and outcomes were tracked using pre- and post-program surveys with clients and providers.

# INTRODUCING GREEN PRESCRIPTIONS: An Innovative Pilot Project for Enhanced Health and Wellbeing

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS



**The pilot project offered free nature-based activities to help reduce anxiety and depression, while promoting connection, wellbeing, and support through time spent outdoors.**

### SGBCHC nature-based activities include:

- Forest Therapy Walks
- Mindful Meanders in Nature
- Stride and Socialize Walking
- Art in the Park
- Gardening 101
- Seed Sharing
- Community Clean Ups
- Guided Snowshoeing
- Yoga in the Park
- Labyrinth Walks
- Hospice Grief Therapy Walks
- Kindness Rock Painting & Planting
- Sip and Connect
- Diabetes Walk & Talks
- Dietitian Walk & Talks
- Mindfulness Walks
- Learn to Run Series
- Grow Your Own Herb Garden
- Pollinator Plants

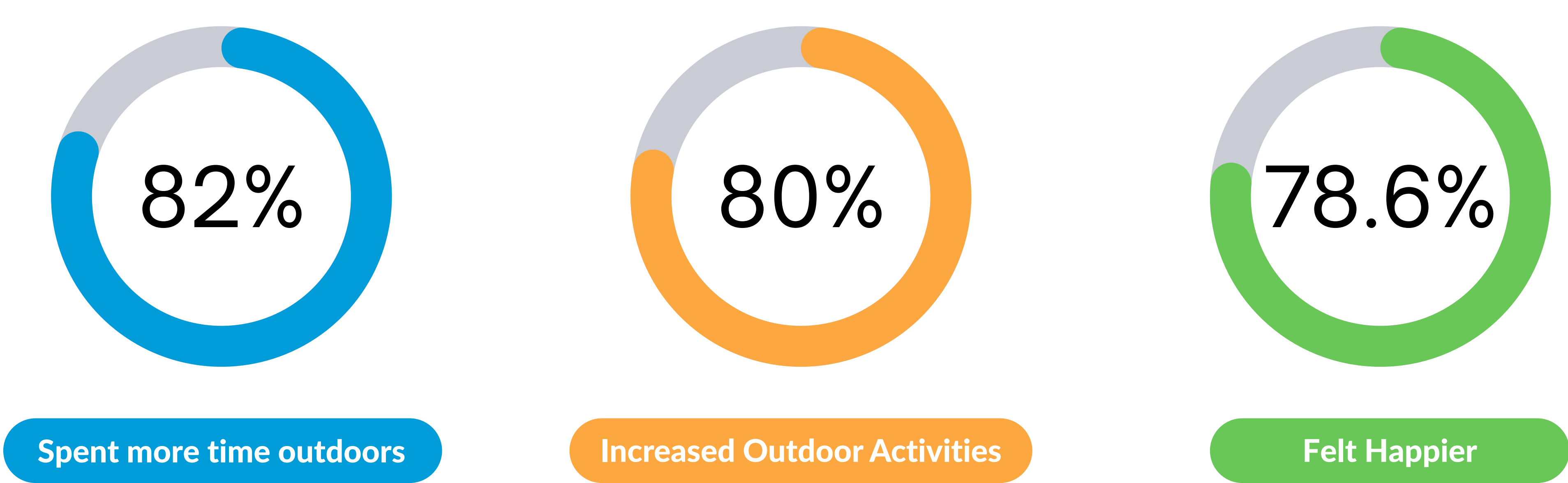
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# OUTCOMES

Post-survey results from the Green Rx pilot show a positive impact on participants' mental health and wellbeing. Healthcare providers noted improved mood and openness to feedback, while participants reported engaging in more activities like weekly walks with neighbours that boosted positive mental health and reduced stress and anxiety.



Since taking part in the Green Rx pilot, I've seen a real shift in my clients. Their mood has lifted—they're more positive, engaged, and open to support. It's made a noticeable difference in their overall wellbeing.

~Healthcare Provider, SGBCHC



# BENEFITS OF NATURE PRESCRIBING



**Improved Mental Health**

- **Stress Reduction:** Spending time in nature lowers cortisol, heart rate, and blood pressure, reducing stress and anxiety.
- **Mood Boost:** Nature improves mood, reduces depression, and fosters happiness.
- **Cognitive Restoration:** Natural settings restore mental energy, improving focus and reducing fatigue.



**Enhanced Physical Health**

- **More Physical Activity:** Outdoor activities like walking and hiking integrate exercise naturally into daily life.
- **Better Sleep:** Exposure to natural light and outdoor activities improve sleep quality.
- **Boosted Immune System:** Nature enhances immune function, reducing inflammation and improving resistance to illness.



**Strengthened Social Wellbeing**

- **Social Interaction:** Nature-based activities create opportunities for connection, helping to support mental well-being.
- **Sense of Belonging:** Group nature activities builds community, trust, and emotional support.
- **Increased Confidence:** Participating in outdoor activities with others can build self-esteem and encourage personal growth.