

1 INTRODUCTION TO GREEN CARE

1.1 THE GREEN CARE METHOD AND FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS

Green Care activities use nature in a goal-directed manner to maintain and enhance people's well-being. Green Care is based on activities originating from the nature, and these activities can be conducted in forests, gardens, on farms as well as in cities. Some activities can be conducted indoors as well. The three basic elements of Green Care are nature, action and community. Effects on well-being are achieved by combining and emphasizing these elements in various ways: through nature's revitalizing aspects, experiences and participation. The activities are conducted in a goal-oriented, professional and responsible manner. Green Care services can be divided into nurture by nature and strength of nature services.

FIG 1 – GREEN CARE METHOD AND FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS

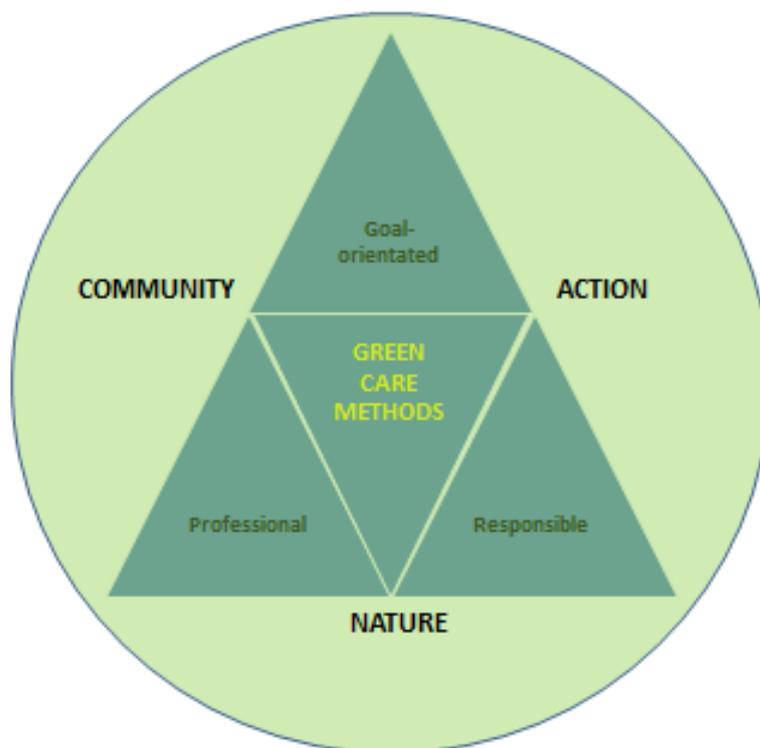


Figure 1 translated (FIN-ENG) by GoGreenCare - project team from resource: MTT VoiMaa – project material, Soini & Vehmasto 2014

The basic elements of Green Care services in are **nature, action and community**. Any kind of natural environment, element, action or community doesn't automatically enhance well-being, so professional opinion is needed when selecting the elements.

Nature is the scene, object or instrument of Green Care actions. The revitalizing aspect of nature is used to enhance, strengthen or speed up the set goals. The natural element can be located in the countryside or in the city and it can refer to

both green plants and a whole forest. The nature used as the action scene can be wilderness, forest, garden, or a farm. Even animals can act as the natural element of Green Care actions.

Action connects a person with his environment and provides a chance for experiences and learning. Action in, with or for nature can enhance the effectiveness. Nature, such as a forest, a garden or a farm environment with animals, provides stimulating grounds for many sorts of activities and experiences that usually bring pleasure and help to activate people. Action in nature can also be restrained, such as relaxing or observing a landscape or animals.

Community enables participation. Interaction joins an individual with the community and can bring the feeling of being accepted. In the best case scenario the support from the community protects one's health and enhances the effectiveness of actions. The feeling of participation in Green Care actions can be achieved not only through interaction with people, but also with animals, nature or a certain place.

FIG 2 – GREEN CARE AND FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS

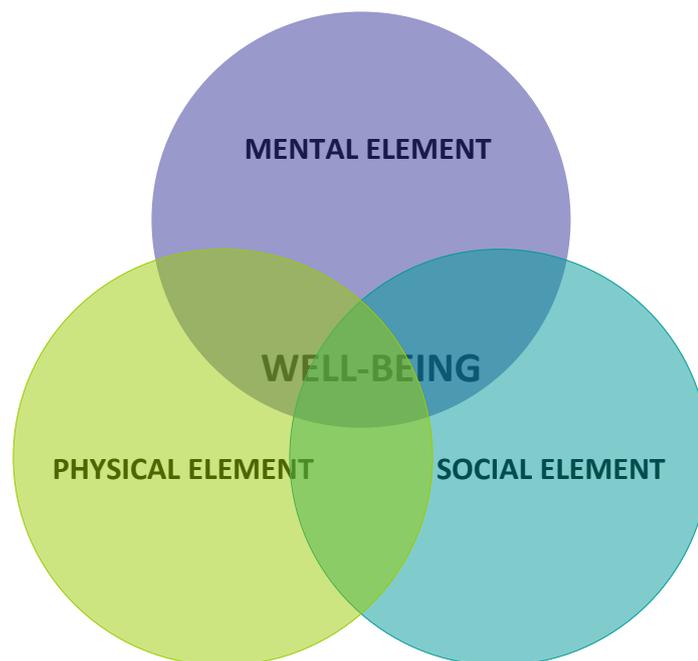


Figure 2 translated (FIN-ENG) by GoGreenCare - project team from resource: MTT VoiMaa – project material, Soini & Vehmasto 2014

1.2 GREEN CARE SECTORS AND ACTIONS

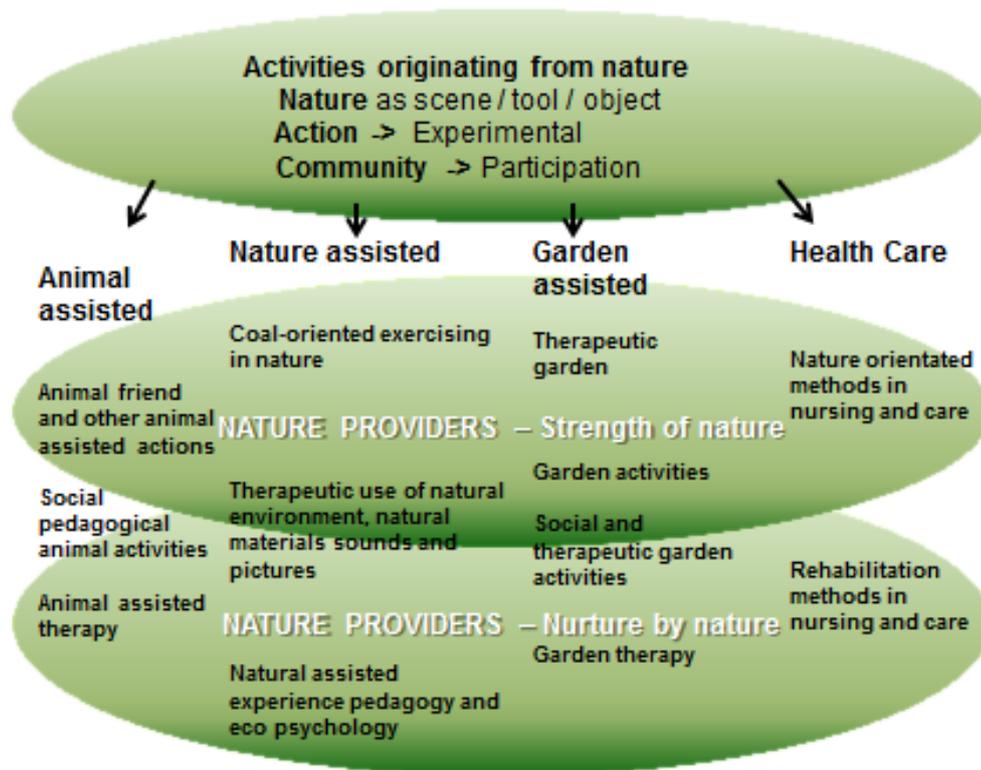
Strength of nature – Nurture by nature

Strength of nature providers: wellness and recreational services originating from nature, nature tourism businesses (less public providers).

Nurture by nature providers: social and healthcare professionals, other nurture services, nature therapy and experience pedagogy professionals (more public providers).

Both of these provider sectors must possess strong professional skills in their industry and master the Green Care methods used. Professional Green Care providers must master and follow the legal and ethical directions of their industry.

FIG 3 - GREEN CARE SECTORS AND ACTIONS



1.3 GREEN CARE ETHICS AND CRITERIA

1.3.1 ANIMAL ASSISTANT GREEN CARE ACTIVITIES

The presence of animals in the hospital environment calmed children and reduced the need for pain medication (Braun e.a. 2009)

- A designated person is responsible for the animal's care and well-being
- This person possesses sufficient knowledge, skills and experience
- The animals used in animal assisted actions are healthy and regularly examined by a veterinarian
- The animal's suitability for the action has been assessed (a species specific test or the owner's assessment)
- The animal protection legislation requirements concerning the specific species have been acknowledged (e.g. Evira's brochures)
- There is a back-up plan for sudden special circumstances (e.g. animal's illness or another reason why it can't be used in the action, changes in the weather)
- There is a back-up plan for situations where animal assisted actions cannot be used (e.g. the customer doesn't benefit from the animal assisted actions, the actions risk the wellbeing of the customer, instructor or animal, the assistants needed in the animal assisted actions are not available etc.)
- The clients' allergies, fears, etc. have been defined and taken into consideration in planning the activities
- The clients are provided with appropriate protective gear or they have been informed in advance what kind of gear they must wear (helmets, shoes, gloves etc.)

1.3.2 GREEN CARE – HORTICULTURE ACTIONS

A British study showed that exposure to green space enhances health and prolongs lifespan, particularly among people belonging to lower income groups. (Mitchell & Popham 2008)

- Poisonous plants are not used in the activities, or if they are, extra caution is taken
- The instructor will know which of the used plants are poisonous or highly allergenic
- If fertilizers or chemicals are used, they are kept away from risk groups and animals and being handled by a competent person,
- The clients' allergies have been defined and taken into consideration (allergies to plants, insects etc.)
- The clients are provided with appropriate protective gear or they have been told in advance what kind of gear they need (gloves, appropriate shoes, weather appropriate clothing for outdoor work etc.)

1.3.3 GREEN CARE ACTIVITIES BASED ON NATURE SERVICES AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

“People who went on a 90-min walk through a natural environment reported lower levels of rumination and showed reduced neural activity in an area of the brain linked to risk for mental illness compared with those who walked through an urban environment. These results suggest that accessible natural areas may be vital for mental health in our rapidly urbanizing world”.

([Gregory N. Bratman](#); [J. Paul Hamilton](#)^b; [Kevin S. Hahn](#); [Gretchen C. Daily](#); [James J. Gross](#) Contributed by [Gretchen C. Daily](#), May 28, 2015)

- The person responsible for nature assisted actions or actions based on sustainable consumption has sufficient knowledge, skills and experience.
- While conducting activities in nature (in the forest), laws and everyman’s rights are followed (making a fire, staying overnight, foraging, waste management, agreements with the landowners etc.).
- Benefits that the forest has to offer (recreation and forest by-products – berries, mushrooms, herbs etc.) must be used sustainably (no littering or damaging nature).
- Recyclable and reusable materials for activities are chosen based on the target group and they must be safe for the client.
- While planning activities, various target groups and their needs are taken into consideration, for example:
 - there are enough instructors, depending on the number of clients and their needs
 - the clients are provided with appropriate protective gear or they have been told in advance what kind of gear they need to bring
 - the following things have been defined in advance:
 - the maximum number of participants,
 - possible limitations to participating in the activities,
 - circumstantial allowances and necessary limits for conducting the activities

1.3.4 GREEN CARE – WELLNESS AND TOURISM

The elderly’s daily activities on Dutch farms were versatile and personally designed. Outdoor activities increased the old people’s appetite and enhanced the quality of nutrition. (Bruin et al. 2009)

- The people responsible for instructing the clients have sufficient knowledge on the clients’ needs and the special features of farm activities so that the activities are conducted safely
- If the clients are physically challenged, the premises used in the activities are unobstructed

- Dangerous substances, articles and tools are kept away from children and other risk groups
- Dangerous areas (fall hazards etc.) have been removed or secured
- If only a certain area of the premises is used when conducting the activities, the areas not belonging to these certain areas are clearly marked and if necessary, entrance to them has been blocked
- The following things have been planned in advance: a suitable number of clients and staff, circumstantial allowances and necessary limits for conducting the activities
- The clients are provided with appropriate protective gear or they have been told in advance what kind of gear they need to bring (protective clothing, shoes, earmuffs etc.)

1.3.5 GREEN CARE – SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE

With the help of an animal it was possible to establish a contact even with patients suffering from severe dementia. Some of them were able to remember the dog's visit even later on. (Lunden 2010)

Cats, dogs and hens are the motivators encouraging the elderly and persons suffering from memory disorders to become active and feel better. Countryside and agriculture memories from childhood are very important to the elderly.

Activities in nature, walking in forest, garden or in yard looking at flowers, feeding birds is physical, social and emotional rehabilitation at same time. Immobile residents can participate since they are taken outside in their beds, or can watch the animals' feeding and other activities on the televisions in their own rooms.

When work with elderly and people with special abilities (green care methods) ethical principles should be taken account and also knowledge of elderly and people with special abilities (development psychology and facts about diseases):

- Safety in nursing, care and rehabilitation. It includes nursing skills and good health (e.g. vaccinations) and the ability to reflect one's feelings and work methods (employee)
- work with customers as individuals: Diseases and functional ability. Employee motivates the client and supports the client's will to rehabilitate.
- Create confidential atmosphere by means of active listening, touch and encouragement. Speaking and guiding in comprehensible language, no "nursing terms".
- respect the elderly: equality, self-determination, respect for life and human dignity and feeling of community.
- rehabilitation : " Help to do it yourself"-attitude

REFERENCES:

MTT VoiMaa – project / www.mtt.fi/greencare
GreenCare Finland ry / www.gcfinland.fi