

### **Contact with nature and wellbeing: the role of nature connectedness, emotion regulation, and season of the year.**

People have been part of the natural environment since the beginning of humankind. However, with the advancements of civilization, the relationship between people and nature has changed. Especially in the recent decades, with the rapid growth of cities, citizens of the “developed” parts of the world have become more and more separated from nature. Urbanization means that a huge part of people in developed countries spend most of their lives in the cities, where life is fast-paced and stressful and access to green areas is often very limited. At the same time, we are observing more and more health problems, both mental and physical.

Many studies show that **spending time in a natural environment - even in urban spaces - has a positive impact on well-being**. Contact with nature improves the ability to cope with stress, negative emotions and unfavorable life events. Exercising in a natural environment increases energy, satisfaction, generates greater commitment and willingness to repeat this type of activity, as well as reduces tension, anger and depression symptoms. The prevalence of depression and anxiety is also related to the amount of time spent in nature. It has even been shown that the number of prescriptions for antidepressants is lower in areas with more urban greenery.

However, **the mechanisms related to the beneficial effects of nature on human well-being are still not well understood**. In this project, I plan to explore the role of both individual variables (such as nature connectedness or emotion regulation) and environmental variables (seasons). It has already been shown that people who have a higher nature connectedness benefit more from being in a natural environment, have higher life satisfaction and experience more positive emotions. Similarly, the strategies used to regulate one's emotions, such as reappraisal and suppression, also affect well-being. However, the impact of these variables on well-being has not yet been studied together.

In addition, especially in a climate such as Polish, there are significant differences in the appearance of the natural environment between the seasons. In summer, everything is green, and in winter - gray and dark. However, **there is very little data on whether contact with nature affects us in the same way at different times of the year**. We will also try to answer this question in the planned research.

An innovative feature of this project is also **a broad approach to the concept of well-being**. In psychology, mental health is often defined as the absence of disorders. However, according to the definition of the World Health Organization, health is not merely the absence of disease, but a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. Therefore, in this project, apart from symptoms of anxiety and depression, we will check emotional functioning, sleep quality, amount of stress, life satisfaction and self-esteem.

**Two studies will be conducted, each consisting of two parts, carried out at different times of the year (summer and winter)**. The first study will consist of completing questionnaires regarding time spent in nature, nature connectedness, emotion regulation and broadly understood well-being. In the second study, participants will additionally wear a smart band for 10 days. It will record their well-being, amount of stress and sleep, physical activity and time spent in natural surroundings. In addition, they will also report their mood during the day and whether they are currently in nature or in a typically urban environment. This will provide self-reported and objective data that will help us understand what makes nature beneficial for our well-being. The results of this project will also be useful in planning activities to improve the health of city dwellers and designing urban spaces in such a way that they are as beneficial as possible for their users.