

## **T4T: Basics of Horticultural Therapy Lesson Plan/Script**

### **Title**

Using Gardening Activities to Support Health and Wellness

### **Format**

Online zoom meeting, ~ 1 hour, small groups (6-10 participants per session); multiple morning and afternoon sessions to be offered. Participants will pre-enroll and pick up materials beforehand (potting tub, pots, plants, soil, resource materials, and so on); instructors will manage enrollment and materials distribution.

### **Instructors**

Leah Taylor, UCCE staff  
Joni Gabriel, MG and horticultural therapist

### **Purpose**

To train gardening educators, care givers, and health-care professionals in using gardening activities as a tool for their own self-care and to improve the health and wellness of the people they're serving.

### **Objectives**

Through discussion, demonstration, hands-on activities, and background reading, participants will

- Increase their understanding of the theory and practice of horticultural therapy.
- Explore techniques for offering hands-on gardening activities and creating supportive environments for different audiences.
- Practice basic gardening skills.
- Gain insight into gardening's value as a compelling tool for improving health and wellness.

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### **1. Introduction & agenda** (Leah, 7 min)

Instructors intros, Zoom basics, class logistics (Q&A at end of each section, no chat, etc)

**Slide:** We're aiming to ...

- Increase understanding of horticultural therapy
- Explore therapeutic gardening programs and activities
- Provide insight into gardening's value as a compelling tool for improving health and wellness.

**Slide:** Materials kit contents

### **3. "Coming into the garden" activity** (Joni, 5-7 min.)

Guided exploration of a plant

**Slide:** 2 hands, succulent (photo only, no title)

### Script of guided exploration

- Place your plant in front of you.
- Take a deep breath
- And now, just for a moment, come into the garden
- Feel *yourself* planted where you're seated.
- Take another deep breath
- Pick up your plant and look at it
- Notice its overall shape, size, different shades of green.
- Gently run your hand over it and notice its fragrance
- Perhaps as you do this thoughts and memories arise
- Just notice them, letting them be there, like clouds passing by
- Now, feel the stem, noticing its texture and shape. Is it square, round, flat?
- How are the leaves attached to the stem? are they opposite? alternating? in a whorl?
- Take a look at the shape and texture of the leaves -- soft, rough, waxy?
- Are the leaf edges smooth, serrated?
- Notice the veins, where they start, where they end.
- Now, take a look again at the whole plant, noting anything else you hadn't noticed before.

Thank you -- and welcome into the garden.

Ask: How was this for you? How did it feel?

Present moment awareness

Sensory awareness

Focus

**Key point:** Simple, short HT activity that can be used ...

- For your own self-care (e.g., stress relief)
- To begin a therapeutic gardening activity you're facilitating for others.

**3. ASK** - What do you get out of gardening? (Leah, 3 min)

Connection with nature

Creativity

Enjoyment

Exercise

Fresh food

Friendships

Mindfulness

New skills

Stress relief

Solace

**4. Horticultural therapy in action (6 min)**

**Videos:**

Carrier Clinic, HT overview, <https://youtu.be/RuJqw0hTRS8>  
End at 1:36

Denver mental health center, <https://youtu.be/AA-7oWBZU6Y>  
End at 1:32, at Wells Fargo ad

Addiction recovery program, <https://youtu.be/AINeqMXn8io>  
2:45

## 5. Definitions (Joni, 5 min)

**Slide:** (HT definition plus diagram of person, goals, facilitator, plant)

Horticultural therapy is a professionally conducted client-centered treatment modality that uses horticulture activities to meet specific therapeutic or rehabilitative goals of its participants. The focus is to maximize social, cognitive, physical, and/or psychological functioning, and/or to enhance general health and wellness.

### Key point

- The terms *horticultural therapy* and *therapeutic horticulture* are often used interchangeably.

**Slide** (with photo of GRF girls, straw hats, planting):

Horticultural therapy is

- Hands on
- Sensory stimulating
- Goal driven
- Person centered

**Slide:**

**HT programs are a team effort**

- Agency administrators
- Clients / participants
- Collaborators & funders
- Professionals (horticultural therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, social workers)
- Agency staff (activities directors, volunteer coordinators, teachers, supervisors)
- Volunteers (MGs, community members, parents, spouses, adult children)

**Key point:**

- MGs are not therapists -- we're part of the team that's implementing the programs and helping participants reach specific goals.
- Many HT programs have been initiated by Master Gardeners, including in San Diego: Growing Opportunities, Reminiscence Gardening, Braille Institute gardening program, FIG (Friendly inclusive gardening)

**Slide:** San Diego Master Gardener HT programs: Growing Opportunities, Reminiscence Gardening, FIG (Friendly Inclusive Gardening)

**Key point:** Many therapeutic goals can be achieved through gardening activities.

**Slide:** Chart showing activities and goals

Examples of gardening activities that can be used to reach therapeutic goals

<i>Gardening Activity</i>	<i>Therapeutic Goal</i>
Pot up herbs & edible flowers	Reduce anxiety, improve diet
Plant seeds	Develop focus, practice sequencing
Transplant seedlings	Improve fine motor skills, reduce stress
Decorate pumpkins with succulents	Maintain social connections, practice following directions
Dig a garden bed	Get exercise, build strength, manage emotions

**6. Video** (7 min): Insight Garden program at Solano, <https://youtu.be/qkaDxV4Eg9w>

**7. Lesson planning** (Joni, 15 min)

**Slide:** (Photo of youth planting)

Lesson Planning

A lesson plan . . .

- Guides the flow of the activity
- Keeps the activity focused on the goals
- Allows helpers to participate with minimal instruction
- Enables the activity to be replicated elsewhere

**Ask:** How do we know what accommodations to make when working with different populations?

- Ask them
- Talk with people who work with them
- Research online and through books and articles

**Video** (4 min): Leah potting up plants (example of a generic gardening activity that can be adapted to many different audiences -- this is a template).

<https://youtu.be/MjFUU0QpLMw>

Leah: show LWG website where the generic lesson plan resides:

Leah: Show MG website (<https://www.mastergardenersd.org/>), Let's Grow Together San Diego, <https://www.mastergardenersd.org/lets-grow-together-san-diego/>

Click on Reminiscence Gardening

Click on "Tabletop planting" (and keep this lesson plan on the screen)

Joni: Go through lesson plan with participants, noting elements such as goal statements, materials list, steps, and tips.

**8. Q&A and Wrap-up (Leah with Joni, 10)**

**Slide**

Resources, website, MG committees doing therapeutic horticulture (reminiscence gardening, growing opportunities, who else?)

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