

POSTER

HUG A TREE STUDY PROPOSAL

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ABSTRACT

The increased sensitivity to social cues associated with loneliness calls for innovative interventions leveraging the therapeutic potential of nature. The therapeutic effects of nature are well established in research on Shinrin-yoku (forest bathing). However, there is a lack of research on the effects of hugging trees on loneliness, despite government advice recommending this intervention. To address this gap, a three-country experiment will investigate any potential effect of hugging trees on loneliness; by having participants hug a tree, a pole, or stand under a tree while listening to a guided meditation. Loneliness will be measured using the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) before and after the condition. Additionally, the Nature Connection Index and WHO-5 Well-Being Index will be administered to explore other potential effects of the intervention. Any difference in loneliness reduction is expected to be small, with hugging a tree showing the greatest reduction. The main reduction in loneliness is likely to be from the meditation itself. Regardless of the direction of the results, valuable suggestions can be made to government bodies recommending hugging trees. Additionally this study will contribute to the wider loneliness intervention literature.