

## Transcript: A Nature Connectedness Exercise

Health Care Provider:

This is a brief exercise aimed at enhancing your sense of connection to nature. Feeling connected to nature has been linked to improved well-being and mindfulness. See if this exercise helps you feel more connected to nature and, if so, consider using it as a way to build that sensation.

First, as with many imagery or mindfulness exercises, we start by drawing attention to your breath. Notice how, without consciously thinking, our brain and body take care of breathing for us. There is a natural rhythm to our breath as it flows in and flows out. Although there are a variety of molecules that comprise the air we breathe, oxygen is essential for our bodies. With each breath, in, our lungs take in the oxygen, which then enters our blood stream. Our hearts push that oxygen-rich blood throughout our bodies to help our essential organs function. About two thirds of the human body is made up of oxygen. And then, with each breath out, our body expels carbon dioxide into the air. All on its own, with trillions of cells working together, our body takes in oxygen and expels carbon dioxide so that we can move and live.

At the same time, throughout the earth, plants, algae, and ocean bacteria, use the energy from the sun to take in carbon dioxide and send out oxygen. This is the same oxygen that is in each breath we take. In a partnership of shared air, we and the plants in our environment work together to sustain life. Consider how every life-giving breath you take is dependent on the plants and algae on earth – including those right around you. Even in the winter, when the plants in many areas no longer produce oxygen, plants and algae in warmer climates make up for it. Your in-breath is the out-breath of plants. Your out-breath is the in-breath of these different organisms. Take a few moments to breathe in and out, imagining how your breath, and the breath of every person and animal around you, depends on the production of oxygen from plants and algae. And in turn, plants, algae, and some bacteria depend on the carbon dioxide we breathe out and the light of the sun.

Consider how the life-giving breath you're taking in now is supported by plants and other organisms. Consider how your next outbreath supports the life of those same organisms.

At this point we will wrap up this exercise. As you move through your day, pause now and then, take a breath. Take a moment to remember your interdependence with the natural environment – remembering that even if you're in a winter environment, your oxygen comes from distant organisms. See if you can take a moment to appreciate that interdependence and allow yourself to feel that connection with nature.