

# The Role of Environmental Science in Mental Health Research: A Scoping Review

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## Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the intricate relationship between the environment and human well-being, including mental health. Environmental science, a multidisciplinary field that explores the interactions between humans and their surroundings, plays a vital role in understanding and promoting mental health. This article explores how environmental science contributes to mental health and highlights various ways in which individuals, communities, and policymakers can harness this knowledge to create environments that foster well-being [1].

One significant aspect of environmental science's contribution to mental health lies in the study of natural environments. Research has consistently shown that exposure to nature, such as parks, forests, and green spaces, has positive effects on mental health. Studies have linked spending time in natural settings to reduced stress, improved mood, enhanced cognitive function, and increased resilience to psychological distress. Environmental scientists study the mechanisms underlying these benefits, including the role of nature in stress reduction, attention restoration, and emotional regulation. Understanding these mechanisms allows for the development of evidence-based interventions, such as Eco therapy and nature-based interventions, which leverage the healing power of nature to support mental well-being [2].

## Description

The quality of the environment we inhabit has a significant impact on mental health. Environmental science examines various aspects of the built environment, such as air and water quality, noise pollution, and access to green spaces, to assess their influence on mental well-being. For example, exposure to air pollution has been linked to increased rates of mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, and cognitive decline. Noise pollution, especially from traffic, can also contribute to stress, sleep disturbances, and impaired cognitive function [3]. Environmental scientists collaborate with public health experts to identify and mitigate these environmental stressors, ensuring that communities are designed and managed in ways that promote mental well-being. They provide crucial data and insights to policymakers to develop regulations and urban planning strategies that prioritize mental health considerations [4,5].

Environmental science also sheds light on the mental health impacts of climate change. The adverse effects of climate change, such as extreme weather events, rising temperatures, and ecosystem disruptions, can have profound psychological consequences. Researchers have documented increased

rates of anxiety, depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and even suicide associated with climate-related events. Environmental scientists study the complex pathways through which climate change affects mental health, including direct and indirect impacts. They explore the psychological responses to loss, displacement, and environmental uncertainty [6].

## Conclusion

Environmental science offers valuable insights into the relationship between the environment and mental health. By understanding the benefits of natural environments, identifying and mitigating environmental stressors, addressing the mental health impacts of climate change, and promoting environmental activism, we can create environments that support and enhance mental well-being. Collaborative efforts among scientists, policymakers, communities, and individuals are essential to applying this knowledge effectively. Incorporating environmental science into mental health policies and practices can contribute to the creation of healthier, more resilient societies. Moreover, recognizing the importance of the environment in mental health reinforces the need for sustainable practices and environmental stewardship, fostering a holistic approach to well-being that benefits both humans and the planet.

## Acknowledgement

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## Conflict of Interest

None.

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