

Reflecting on learnings at the 2012 Let Nature Feed Your Senses Conference

Dealing with extreme situations in a practical common sense manner, Residents demanding from care home better opportunities to go on visits, Positive experience for hosts and visitors from interaction, Perspective gained from interaction, A new way of learning, Importance of nature in people's lives,

Accessibility, Childhood memories – chasing chickens, Coming together – sharing the experience, Trust, Inclusion, Making new friends – sharing experiences, Inspiring group to work together to grow and cook the food grown.

Independent – motivation to be independent, Try something new, less talk more action! Hands on activities, Team building, More opportunities for people to experience, Praise for people who achieve, Taking managed risks, Tangible outcomes, Building links/rapport with organisations, Changed way things are done.

Brought smells of Christmas to care home – oranges, cinnamon, nutmeg, little things can mean so much, Go with the flow, and Embrace the 'reality', unexpected enthusiasm for simple tastes.

Overcoming fear of animals, Owl pellets, Foraging, Excitement – being 'allowed' to pick, Tractor/trailer, Older people – reminisce, Sequence – eg touch, milk – ice cream – food journey, All senses where possible, Finding the unexpected, Grinding wheat between paving slabs, Used quad bike with trailer hooked to back to deal with unexpected mobility problems, Close up experiences 'real', Peeling/coring apple, New experiences – gooseberries.

Long –term positive impact, Exclusive use of site – non judgemental, Freedom to move, Unplanned activities, Developing relationships, Doing things in a different way, Being able to touch, Handling artefacts.

Know your audience, Communicate with carers, Inform visitors of potential hazards, Preparation is key, Know what you can deliver and can't, Group size less than 15 with special needs – 6 to 8 hands on experience, Needs to be 3 or 4 visits based on a programme eg. "Seed to sandwich" built around seasons.

Something to take home – end product relative to experience – strawberry, photo, People may surprise you, Don't Panic!! Eat/drink from nature, Access – bringing things to them; Go with the flow, changing plans when wet.

Addressing mobility and access, Don't try to achieve too much, keep it simple 'less is more', Tree climbing, managing livestock, Plant trees that group come back to look at, nature palettes/nature crowns, Postcodes in rural areas.... awareness, More aware of sensory inputs, No need to 'over plan', If it rains it rains, Feed back to host – job well done.

These notes are from a group activity discussing: What worked well, what didn't and what are the learnings from visits to farms and nature reserves by older people and people of all ages with disabilities throughout the project.

