



Mindful of Nature

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# 2025 PILOT PROGRAM SUMMARY REPORT



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# OVERVIEW

In 2025, Mindful of Nature launched eight (8) pilot programs across the United States to bring nature-based mindfulness practices to diverse communities, including **elders, veterans, youth, youth leadership, LGBTQI+, healthcare workers, environmental educators, environmental activists, and social service professionals**. These programs were delivered by certified nature-based mindfulness teachers aligned with Mindful of Nature's mission: to foster human and ecological well-being by deepening connection, awareness, and compassion through nature-based mindfulness experiences.

Across the half-day, full-day, and MBNC programs, participants reported ***profound emotional relief, strengthened feelings of ecological belonging, and tangible reductions in stress and anxiety***. Teachers observed notable shifts in group cohesion, emotional openness, and personal insight—often occurring within just a few hours outdoors.

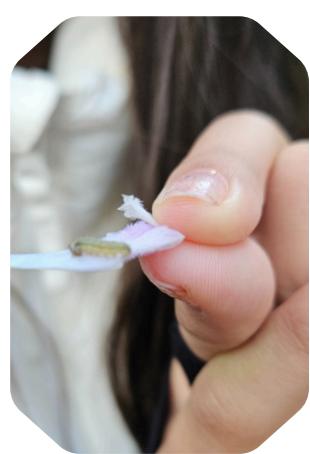
This summary report synthesizes key findings, integrating qualitative narratives with quantitative outcomes to highlight the impact, challenges, and opportunities for the 2026 Mindful of Nature program expansion.

## PROGRAM DETAILS

Population	Program Types	Location	Participants
Elders	Full-day retreat	Boston, MA	10
Veterans	Half-day retreat	Missoula, MT	5
Youth Leadership Staff	Full-day retreat	San Francisco, CA	13
Clinicians & First Responders	Full-day retreat	Half Moon Bay, CA	9
Frontline Healthcare Workers	Half-day retreat	Santa Rosa, CA	9
Environmental Educators & Activists	Full-day retreat	Westchester, NY	15
College Outdoor Leaders	Full-day retreat	Baltimore, MD	8
Youth (Bridge the Gap)	MBNC 6-modules	Sausalito, CA	10

Across programs, Mindful of Nature teachers consistently noted:

- High depth of engagement despite lower-than-expected attendance.
- Strong emotional breakthroughs and collective support within groups.
- Deep gratitude from participants who often reported the programs came “exactly when needed.”



## IMPACT: PRE–POST SURVEY DATA FINDINGS

Quantitative data from adult programs show robust positive shifts across all measured dimensions on a scale from 1 to 5. Below is a subset of analyzed results from 21 survey questions asked before and after the program.

### Section I:

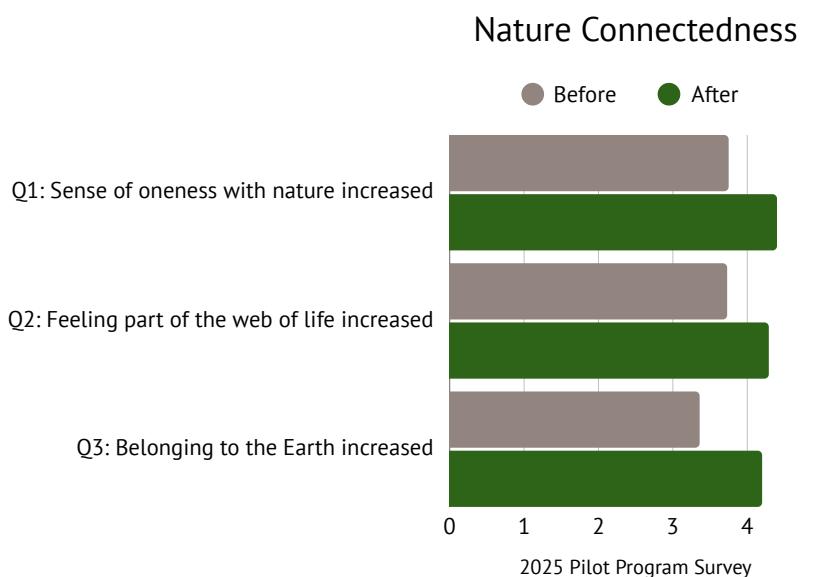
#### Significant Increase in Nature Connectedness

Participants demonstrated a stronger sense of ecological belonging and interdependence.

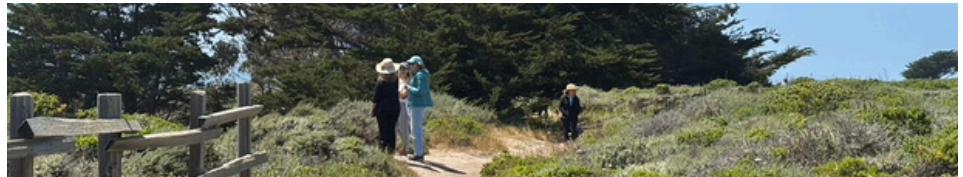
Q1: Sense of oneness with nature increased from 3.75 → 4.4

Q2: Feeling part of the web of life increased from 3.73 → 4.29

Q3: Belonging to the Earth increased from 3.36 → 4.20



**These increases affirm Mindful of Nature's core theory of change: that mindful immersion in nature cultivates empathy, humility, and environmental stewardship.**



## Section II: Marked Reduction in Anxiety and Emotional Distress

Nature-based mindfulness led to meaningful emotional relief. on average, the participants responded with 23% less distress, and most notably, a reduction of 35% nervousness and anxiety.

Q4: Worrying uncontrollably decreased from 3.31 → 2.17

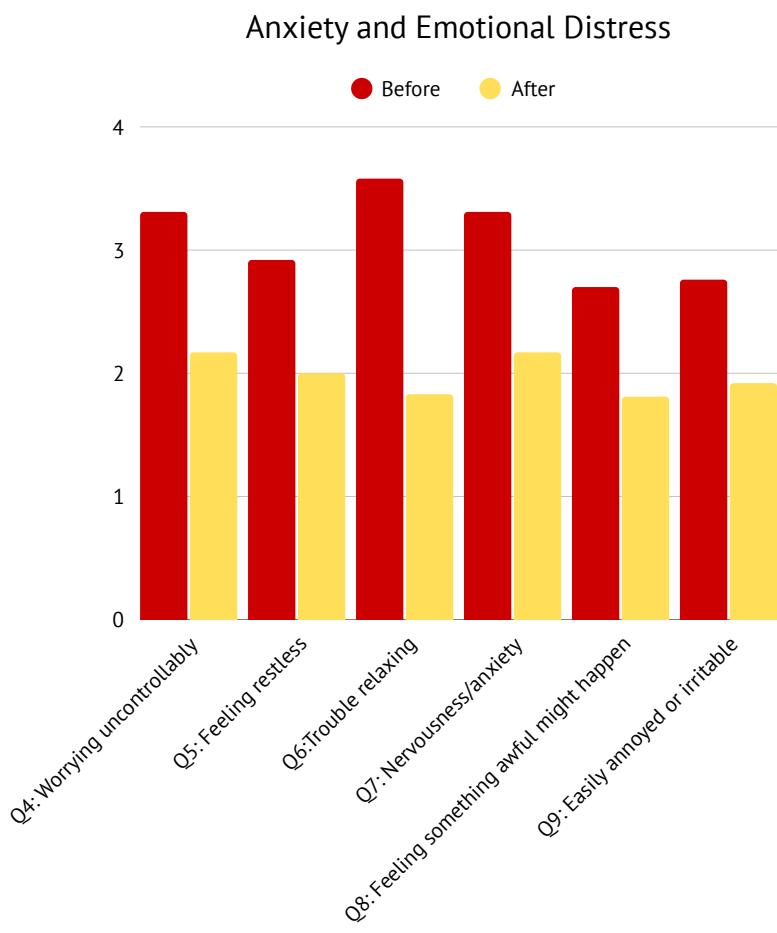
Q5: Feeling Restless decreased from 2.92 → 2.00

Q6: Trouble relaxing decreased from 3.58 → 1.83

Q7: Nervousness/anxiety decreased from 3.31 → 2.17

Q8: Feeling something awful might happen decreased from 2.70 → 1.81

Q9: Easily annoyed or irritable decreased from 2.76 → 1.92



**Participants repeatedly described the programs as “grounding,” “restorative,” and “exactly what I needed.”**

### Section III: Increased Ecological Humility & Interconnected Worldview

Participants became less hierarchical in their view of humanity in relation to nature.



Q10: "Humans are top of a hierarchy in nature" decreased from 2.80 → 2.39



Q11: "My welfare is independent of nature" decreased from 2.59 → 2.2

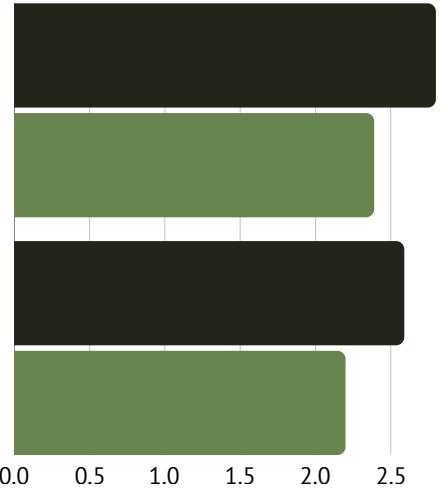
**These shifts mirror Mindful of Nature's mission to cultivate humility, reciprocity, and a felt understanding of interdependence.**



### Ecological Humility & Interconnected Worldview

● Before      ● After

Q10: Humans are top of a hierarchy in nature



Q11: My welfare is independent of nature

0.0    0.5    1.0    1.5    2.0    2.5    3.0

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### Section IV: Expanded Sense of Perspective

Participants reported feeling like "a small but meaningful part of a larger whole", which supported emotional regulation and reduced stress.

**Overall, all nature-related indicators increased, and all stress-related indicators decreased—a rare and compelling pattern in contemplative intervention research.**

# QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS FROM TEACHERS

Across all programs, teachers observed:

## **1. Deep Emotional Relief and Connection**

Participants often arrived anxious, overwhelmed, or exhausted. Within hours, teachers reported:

- “Shoulders lowered, faces relaxed, and people settled.”
- “Meditation was easier than they’d ever found it.”
- “A sense of community emerged almost immediately.”

Healthcare workers and first responders, in particular, described the retreats as life-giving, replenishing, and emotionally clarifying.

## **2. Nature as a Safe and Healing Container**

Veterans, clinicians facing burnout, and youth leaders all described nature as a space where emotional honesty felt possible. One participant joked, “My telomeres are longer after today,” capturing the embodied sense of renewal.

## **3. High Program Satisfaction Despite Attendance Challenges**

Several teachers reported fewer participants than originally registered, echoing trends in engagement. However, smaller groups often resulted in more intimate, powerful experiences.

## **4. Teachers’ Process Feedback**

- Teachers attended four networking sessions in which we shared pilot program experiences and provided support for each other. All appreciated this opportunity to learn from each other and willingly shared stories.
- Teachers emphasized the administrative load (recruitment, site selection, data entry).
- Several recommended exploring stronger organizational partnerships for recruitment.

These insights will help refine the 2026 program model.



## KEY INSIGHTS:

### PARTICIPANTS DESCRIBE THE MINDFUL OF NATURE SESSION

**“** *The tenderness, wisdom, and playfulness that emerged in the group was extraordinary.* **”**

#### **Healthcare Professional:**

“Thank you so much—this day was exactly what I needed. I can’t express how much I appreciate it.”

#### **Social Worker:**

“I’m going to circle a lower age group on the post-survey. Today helped so much I feel like my telomeres are longer.”

#### **Attorney & Caregiver:**

“I never get to let go of everything and take care of myself. Being out here today was such a gift.”

#### **Environmental Leadership Young Adult:**

“As a very anxious person and busy, but also very fortunate and blessed person, I should remember that I have the power to CHOOSE where I focus: I can dwell on things that make me anxious, or I can shift my attention to the good: the people I love and the blessings I have.”



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2025 pilot demonstrates that Mindful of Nature's nature-based mindfulness programs:

- Improve emotional well-being
- Deepen ecological belonging and humility
- Support caregivers, youth, environmental leaders and activists, LGBTQI+, educators, elders, medical first responders, and frontline healthcare.
- Build community and resilience through shared nature experiences.

Opportunities for 2026 include:

- Building organizational partnerships with non-profit organizations, universities, and healthcare institutions to assist in organizing, promoting, and administering Mindful of Nature sessions to increase awareness and attendance.
- Streamlining administrative processes for teachers.
- Support teachers by orchestrating a professional development network.
- Expanding access for underserved communities, a core Mindful of Nature priority.
- Working on developing a science-driven research study.

The 2025 Mindful of Nature Pilot Program clearly demonstrates that nature-based mindfulness is a powerful, scalable approach to fostering human wellbeing and environmental connection—advancing Mindful of Nature's vision of a world where personal and planetary health are deeply intertwined.