

What is horticultural therapy?

"Horticultural therapy techniques are employed to assist participants to learn new skills or regain those that are lost. Horticultural therapy helps improve memory, cognitive abilities, task initiation, language skills, and socialization. In physical rehabilitation, horticultural therapy can help strengthen muscles and improve coordination, balance, and endurance. In vocational horticultural therapy settings, people learn to work independently, problem solve, and follow directions. Horticultural therapists are professionals with specific education, training, and credentials in the use of horticulture for therapy and rehabilitation." - American Horticultural Therapy Association

Our HT Programs with HCPS

BOOST:

- **Population:** 10th grade students in HCPS Occupational Course of Study
- **Goal of Program:** Teach vocational skills through working in the garden and designing garden beds.

Life Skills Class:

- **Population:** High school students (ages 13-21) in the Intensive Intervention classrooms through HCPS.
- **Goal of Program:** Provide positive social interactions; improve fine/gross motor skills.

Our HT Programs with Other Organizations

Residential Onsite Program:

- **Population:** Adolescents in recovery from eating disorders and co-occurring mental health issues.
- **Goal of Program:** Provide therapeutic sessions that aid their recovery.

Residential Offsite Program:

- **Population:** Women in recovery from eating disorders and co-occurring mental health issues.
- **Goal of Program:** Provide therapeutic sessions that aid their recovery.

Retirement Community:

- **Population:** Independent Retirees; individuals in assisted living with chronic health conditions.
- **Goal of Program:** Build community and aid in increasing quality of life/decrease stress.

Why Horticultural Therapy?

Research often focuses on individuals with disabilities, older adults in assisted living, and those with mental health disorders. While more research is needed in the field, general consensus is that HT:

- Helps reduce depression and anxiety
- Provides social opportunities and increases feelings of well-being
- Helps improve gross and fine motor skills
- Improves quality of life
- Decreases stress

Observations from the garden:

- Increased self-esteem over time
- Increases socialization among often isolated groups
- Decreased anxiety
- Improved communication
- Creating a connection to each other and the world around them
- Improved emotional regulation