

# Holistic nature-based cancer rehabilitation

## Experiences from the Copenhagen Centre for Cancer and Health – a municipal setting

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### Background

Since May 2020 the Copenhagen Centre for Cancer and Health (CCCH) has offered a nature-based group intervention as part of the CCCH cancer rehabilitation program.

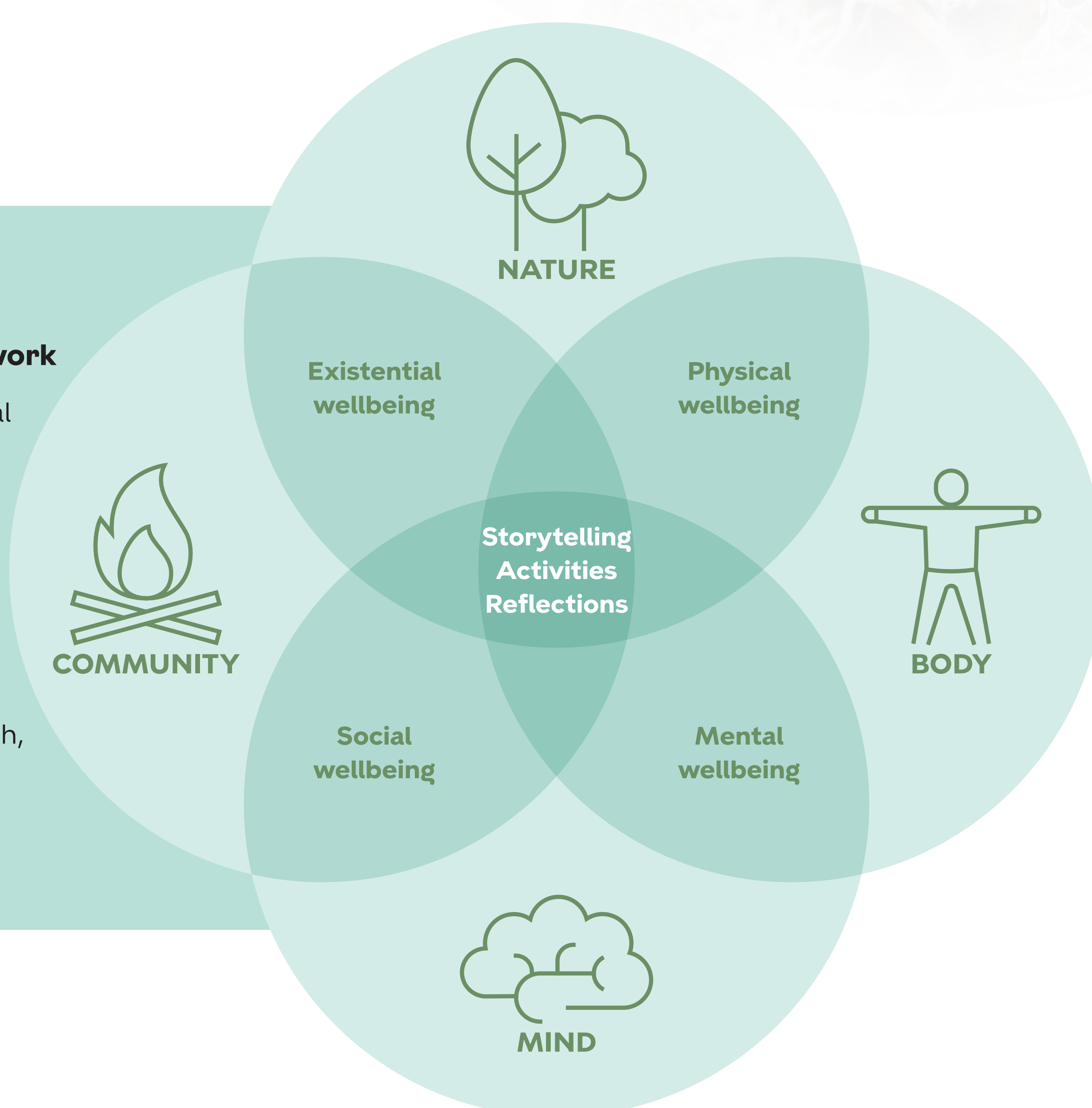
### The intervention

#### The intervention in keywords

- Every second Thursday all year, 3-4½ hours
- Participants meet in Hareskoven
  - 20 km outside Copenhagen
  - Accessible by public transport
- Rolling admission – patients can participate 4-6 days
- Fixed itinerary with changing themes and activities
- Two instructors (dietician, occupational therapist, physiotherapist)
- Inclusion:
  - All cancer diagnoses and stages of illness
  - Able to walk 2-3 km in uneven terrain

#### Methodological framework

Inspired by Høegmark et.al (2021): The Wildman Program – Rehabilitation and Reconnection with Nature for Men with Mental or Physical Health Problems – A Matched-Control Study. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18(21), 11465.

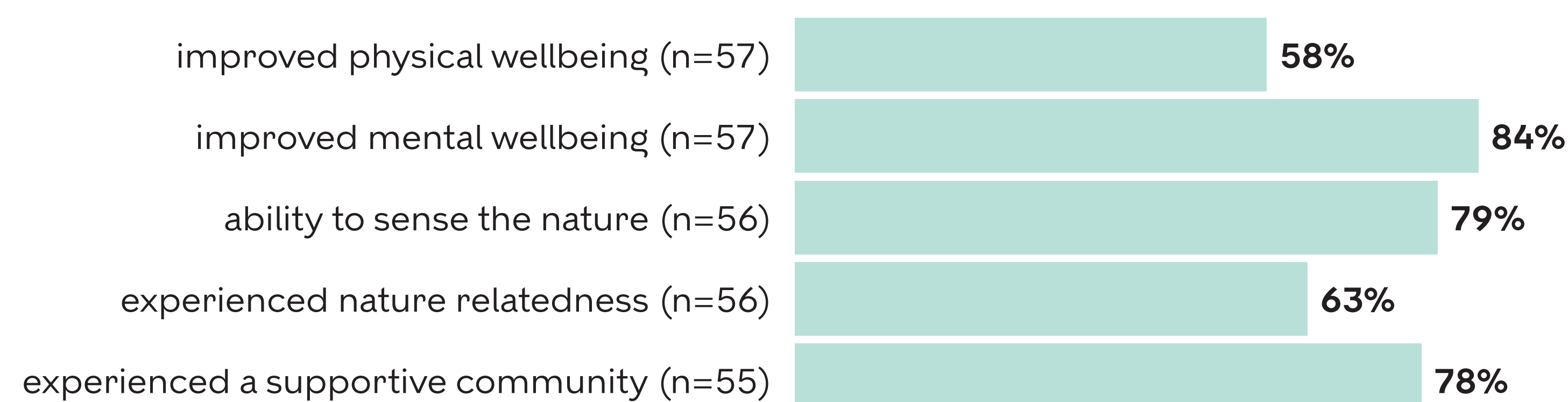


### Results

#### Participants outcome

Methodology: An electronic questionnaire designed by the CCCH with 26 questions was sent to all participants by the end of the intervention. N=79, response rate 72%.

#### Proportion responding high/very high degree



Two participants tell about their outcome

#### Experiences of health professionals

The intervention has potential to overcome some general challenges, as:

- It is possible to include participants who do not feel comfortable in traditional indoor group interventions
- The intervention is relevant regardless of earlier experience with nature and outdoor life and can include mixed groups (gender, age, state of illness etc.)
- An existential dimension is added when participants observe the cycle of life and feel part of nature
- Participants achieve hope and relief
- Participants achieve new narratives and identity

### Conclusion

- The CCCH consider nature-based rehabilitation to be relevant as
  - holistic nature-based rehabilitation is feasible
  - nature-based rehabilitation contributes to improved mental and physical wellbeing and apparently overcomes some of the general challenges experienced by municipal health care providers
- The CCCH therefore encourages municipal health care providers to consider nature-based interventions as part of municipal rehabilitation programmes