

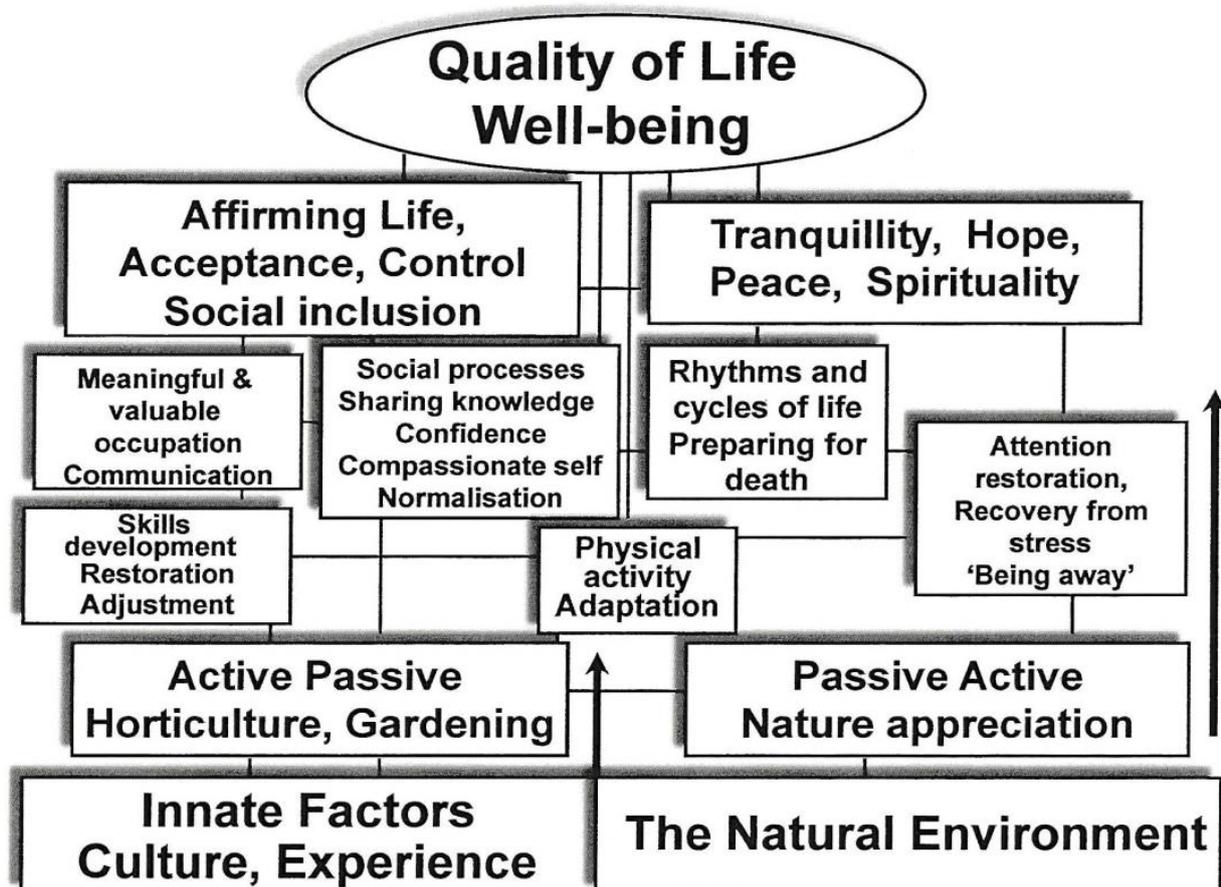
# Social and Therapeutic Horticulture

## What is it?

Social and therapeutic horticulture (STH) is the process of using plants and gardens to improve physical and mental health, as well as communication and thinking skills. It can also use the garden as a safe and secure place to develop someone's ability to mix socially, make friends and learn practical skills that will help them to be more independent. ([www.thrive.org.uk](http://www.thrive.org.uk))

## What are the benefits for palliative patients?

"Social and therapeutic horticulture (STH) for palliative care promotes wellbeing and quality of life for people affected by life limiting illness through active or passive gardening, horticulture or accessing nature". (Pilgrem, L.; ehospice; 2015)



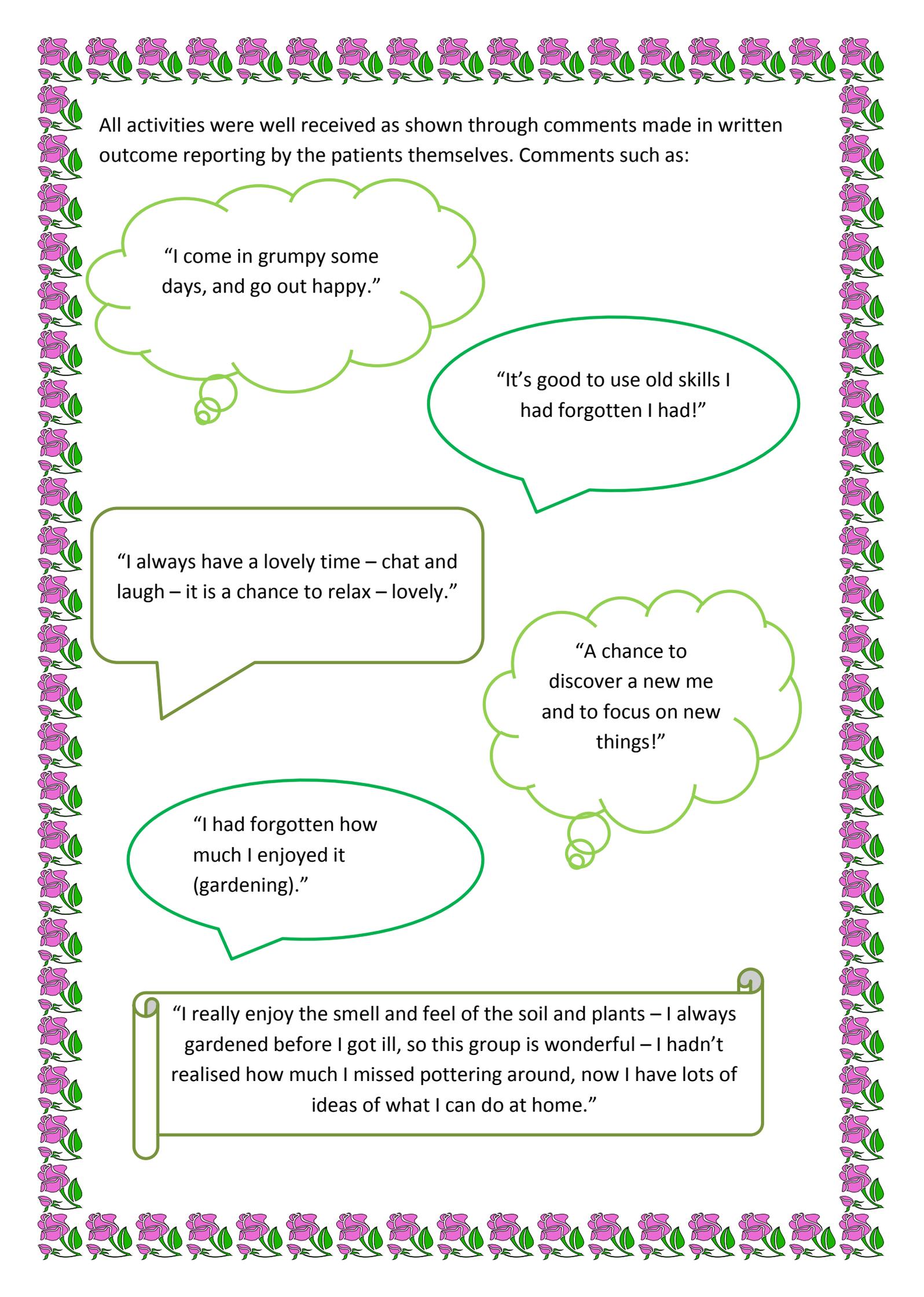
## STH within The Rowans Hospice and Living well Centre

The original development of the Living Well Clinic on a Wednesday at the hospice enabled the growth of therapy offered by Occupational Therapy.

A Social and Therapeutic Horticulture group began in conjunction with a craft group for a two hour period each Wednesday morning. The activities included, amongst others:

- ❖ Painting terracotta pots and planting up with bulbs
- ❖ Creating spring planters
- ❖ Making Tussie Mussie
- ❖ Creating cress heads
- ❖ Making pot pourri
- ❖ Planting seeds and pricking out when grown
- ❖ Pressing flowers and making cards with the result
- ❖ Making bird seed fat balls





All activities were well received as shown through comments made in written outcome reporting by the patients themselves. Comments such as:

“I come in grumpy some days, and go out happy.”

“It’s good to use old skills I had forgotten I had!”

“I always have a lovely time – chat and laugh – it is a chance to relax – lovely.”

“A chance to discover a new me and to focus on new things!”

“I had forgotten how much I enjoyed it (gardening).”

“I really enjoy the smell and feel of the soil and plants – I always gardened before I got ill, so this group is wonderful – I hadn’t realised how much I missed pottering around, now I have lots of ideas of what I can do at home.”

With the opening of the new Living Well Centre, has come the opportunity for even further growth with the Social and Therapeutic Horticulture Group now running regularly on a Thursday afternoon.



As attendance at the centre grows and develops it is planned to add outdoor activities with large raised troughs on the patio and in time maybe even an allotment!

Reference:

Social and Therapeutic Horticulture for Palliative Care Model (Sempik, 2013).

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