

WILLOW AND HIS HELPERS

Gardens are very special places. Lots of people have one and those who don't have parks or balconies or window boxes instead.

Which do you have?

Gardens are alive and they are constantly changing just like us. They change at different times of the day and at different seasons of the year. This is one of the reasons why people like them so much.

If you go inside buildings, you can see where the people who live there or who work there have tried to bring a garden inside. Just look out for plants, vases of flowers, pictures of trees or nature.



Everyone enjoys their garden in a different way. Some people like their gardens to be very neat and tidy and ordered, where others prefer them to be wild and natural and to attract lots of visitors, like birds and butterflies and bees.

Tell me about your garden?

Which do you prefer?

Would you like to draw your garden place?

Have you got any pictures of plants or flowers in your home, where a garden has come inside?

Very often we give people presents of flowers or plants or pictures of nature to make them feel better.

We're now going on a little journey together using 'mind pictures', to a very special garden that really existed. To get there takes a special journey called a 'mind' journey. We get there using our mind.

Gardens help people and people feel better when they go into them. So our mind journey to our special garden can also help us to feel better:

Once, in a big city, there was a special garden called the 'Centre' It was at the centre of where lots of people lived.

☹ Some of these people were ANGRY - they would shout and swear and sometimes even hit other people.

☹️ Some were SAD - they felt like no-one really loved them or cared about them.

☹️ Some were WORRIED - they would keep on thinking about bad things happening and not know how to stop it.

☹️ Some were FRIGHTENED - Bad things had happened to them at some time and they really did not want them to happen again.

☹️ Some were LONELY - they couldn't tell other people what they wanted to or share with others.

☹️ Some people just did not like themselves very much, because they thought that others did not like them - they think that they are too tall or too short or too fat or too thin - others had made them feel different at some time.

☹️ Some were SHY or NERVOUS - or didn't have CONFIDENCE in themselves and it was difficult to make new friends or to talk or join in with fun things to do.

☹️ Some didn't feel right on the inside and everything around them just did not seem right either

☹️ Others always seemed to do the wrong thing and always ended up in trouble.

☹️ Some just felt ILL.

Have you ever felt like any of these people we've just read about?

Which one sounds most like you?

None of these people are very happy being like this and would really rather that things were very different for them.

Gardens have gifts for people. We've read about some of them; trees, plants, flowers, and natural visitors. Some of the people who lived in the city were able to visit the centre garden to help them feel better.

When we are with trees and flowers and their visitors in nature, if we look at them in a special way, they can talk to us about the gifts that they have for us.



There are all the things you use every day that plants give us - Can you think of some?

Here are a few - wood, paper, medicines, food,

These are just a few of the gifts that we take for granted - there are many other gifts that we are really only just starting to find out about.

For the people who visited the centre garden, they needed a little bit more to help them feel better and this is where Willow and his helpers come in:

Are you ready for your mind journey now?

Well first we need to get ready for take off - Just like any journey!

First of all with a mind journey we need to put on the big heavy boots, with heavy magnetic soles that keep you very down to earth!

Now we step inside the magic glass elevator to take us where we need to go. - From under our feet a big white tube comes up all around us... And goes up and up and up - up to our knees, up to our waist, then our shoulders, then to the top of our head and up, way up into the sky above until it can't go up any further,

We never take the magic column down but every time we go on a mind journey, we need to build it up again first.

Now nearly ready, we just need our magic suit of golden armour to keep us safe and secure.

This is a special suit, it is shaped like an egg shell, made of shiny gold, all around us and it doesn't let anyone else's anger or hurt effect us at all - it just bounces right off it.

But what it does do is let all the kindness and all the gentleness and love all around us, reach us so that we can grow as beautiful as the trees and the flowers in the garden.

NOW we're ready!

Some people prefer to keep their eyes open and look at the pictures and others prefer to keep their eyes closed, so they can really see their mind journey clearly and look at the pictures at the end. Some people like to have their eyes open for a while and then close them to see the garden within and then open them again. Whichever way you like to do this is fine,

In our mind picture we are walking along together, we're very happy and it is a lovely day and we see a beautiful tree. He is so big and magnificent, he is called a 'Willow' tree and he has long flowing branches hanging down all around him. As we stop to admire him he smiles



at us - yes, we can see that he has a face, with eyes a nose and a mouth.

He calls us over and as we get nearer, we can see that all around him are little 'helpers' - they have faces and they are smiling at us too!

Willow speaks to us, he invites us to come and give him a hug and as we do so, he wraps his lovely long flowing branches around us and gently hugs us back.

He tells us that his job is very special, he is the guardian of the centre garden - A place called 'The garden within' and if we want to give him another hug, he will take any worries or fears from us and look after them - would you like to give him another hug?

As Willow takes away the worries and the fears, his helper friends around him sort them all out for us.

Willow is very wise, he has lived for a very long time and has learned a lot of things from all the birds and insects that visited him over the years.

If we would like to enter the garden within, his helpers will show us a way to feel better about ourselves.

Shall we go?

Peeking out from the bottom of Willow's roots is a very friendly little face - he helps to guide willow's visitors to the garden within. He calls us over and as we walk through the gateway we suddenly find ourselves in the most beautiful garden ever.



The trees and plants and flowers are the most beautiful colours we have ever seen Not really like natural colours we are used to because each colour has a lovely sparkly iridescent shininess about it.

Hmmn - wouldn't it be lovely if we could get felt tip pens that look like this?



The flowers have the most beautiful perfume to them and when we breathe it in - it seems as though it lifts us up and makes us happy and bathes us from the inside out (not like a regular bath!)

We listen to all the garden sounds, the birds that visit are singing - it sounds much more real than real, just like we have never really heard a bird sing up until now.



A hum as the insects fly past to visit the flowers - I wondered until now how they choose which one to visit with so many to choose from - but look.....

There are Willow's helpers calling each bee and butterfly over to certain flowers in turn to help them in their work.



As we wander around the garden together taking in the beautiful sights and sounds, we touch some of the of the plants growing to see what they feel like.

Some feel warm and soft like velvet.

Others are cool and shiny, like glass and as we gently touch each leaf and petal it gives off some more of the beautiful perfume.

As we walk around the garden within watching Willow's helpers dancing and calling the insects to the flowers, we hear some water flowing. - Over there -right in the middle of the garden is a beautiful flowing fountain.

We can see the water glistening, sparkling brilliantly in the golden sunlight - as if the sun was shining right out of the middle of it.



Willow gently calls us and says " It's the Fountain of Health - Go ahead and drink from it or bathe from it if you like - it will help you to feel much better."

Would you like to do that?

We're always told that we need to drink more water and this is especially pure and tastes very sweet and cool and refreshing.

The water helps us feel good on the inside when we drink it - and good on the outside when we pour it over our skin,

When we finish at the Fountain of Health, we walk back towards our dear friend Willow and hear him gently call to us once more.



"If you would like to choose and spend some time with one of my helpers, before you leave them, they would be very happy to help you feel happier!"

Would you like to do that?

Which one would you like to play with?

Choose a helper, what do they look like?

What do they say to you?

What do they show you in the garden?

When you are ready to say goodbye to Willow's helper, we turn to leave the garden within. We follow Willow's guide to the roots of Willow and thank him and hug him again.



Willow says that if we want to we can leave our worries and fears behind with him and his helpers will look after them and sort them out for us.

Do you think that's a good idea?

We say goodbye and walk back along our road together - But this time we feel very refreshed and relaxed and happy.

Just like being washed from the inside out.

And, just checking to see our big heavy magnetised boots are still there, we're pulled right back in to this room and space and book.

Well..... What do you feel about that now?

Which part did you enjoy the most?

Any time you want to, you can go back and visit Willow and his helpers in the garden within, because now you know where it is.

Would you like to draw the garden within?

The gardens and their helpers are all around us and help us to feel better all the time - one of these ways is with natural remedies, they are safe and pure and special - they help us in special ways - You might be taking some too!

The pictures of the flowers introduce us to Willow's helpers: -

Which one is most like the one you played with in the garden - Choose one and colour it in.

Take a picture back to help someone you know.

GUIDELINES FOR USE:

These materials are written for use with children aged 9 - 13 who have emotionally and behaviourally challenging difficulties. They may even have experienced trauma or crisis in the past.

They provide a framework with which you can work to help your child release some of the misperceptions that they may be subconsciously holding onto from the past. However, the approach will need to be adaptable and flexible to suit that individual child's needs.

These materials can be simplified for working with younger children or 'pepped' up for working with adults.

Discussing the outcomes of the journey is very useful and you can make a note of what can be used as a metaphor or a symbol for what is happening in that young person's life.

The photographs themselves are real and this system can be used with children and big children (adults) alike. If this is the case it is suggested that instead of colouring in the pictures that adults are allowed to choose their picture and sit quietly with it for a few minutes - Find the Garden Within - and see what happens! They may need to take this away with them to work with over a period of time.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES:

Make a garden of your own - Follow up with the planting seeds relaxation session. This can link in with the HET Eco therapy programme in Stepping Stone 12

'Willow's Helpers' The Pictures

These pictures are to be used with the story – Willow and his helpers

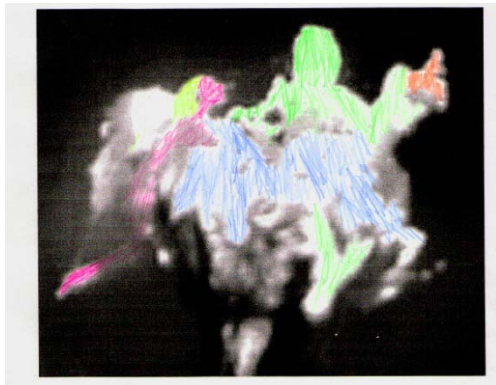
You will need to print off a full set of these pictures

At the end of this story, we say Goodbye to the helper who we chose to come and play with us in the garden and we leave Willow's garden, handing over any worries or concerns that we have, behind us.

When we were playing with Willow's Helpers, they may have had a very special message to help us with any worries after we left.

The idea of these pictures, is to choose which one looks most like the Helper we met in the garden.

By choosing a picture and having a full set of crayons, they can colour the helper in as they talk about Him/her. At the same time as they are colouring in we can ask the child if the helper has any gifts for them and if so to colour them in the picture.



In this example we can see that the little boy (6) concerned had seen a fairy, a special lady that was helping him (he was receiving HET therapy at the time.) This was coloured in purple. He saw a helpful man (coloured in green – this is the colour of balance and healing. And represents a man teaching who he had developed a more positive relationship with) and the man had a flower gift for him (if you remember in "Pat's Garden Within), flowers represent gifts. This is the understanding and knowledge that this particular

teacher was offering him at the time. And the gift was the mask. This is coloured in blue which is the colour of communication. He was indeed making communication! This is particularly significant for this little boy, as he was abused at a very young age by his father. He hadn't been able to communicate anything around this situation, but having HET had changed around his violent and self harming behaviours.



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