



*“As the seeds grow, so our  
minds grow too.”*

Mindfulness and cultural  
connections in community  
gardening among Bhutanese  
refugees

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Please grab a piece of paper and something to write with.

## **EXPERIENTIAL EXERCISE!**

In 1990, approximately 108,000 Nepali Bhutanese people fled or were forced to leave Bhutan.



In the US, Bhutanese refugees are provided resources, but expected to be self-sufficient within 6-9 months.



Despite increased risk, there are many barriers to Bhutanese refugees seeking mental health treatment.



Refugee resettlement agencies throughout the country use community gardens to promote psychological healing, self-sufficiency, community engagement, and a return of human dignity.



Informed Consent

Refugee Health Screener-15 (RHS-15)  
Patient Health Questionnaire-15 (PHQ-15)  
Medical Outcomes Study – Social Support Survey (MOS SSS)

Measures Scored and Referrals Made as Needed

Semi-structured Interview

Community Meeting to Discuss Data and Seek Interpretations

Participating in a community garden was significantly associated with increased perceived social support.





*“I meet the neighbors from refugee camp or Bhutan. People I haven’t seen in years, I now meet in the garden.”*



*“I told some new families about a garden wo we can have time to talk, think about our old home in Bhutan, and at least touch some soil.”*



*“If our mind is thinking deeply or wandering, if I go to my plot it turns mind to useful. As the seeds grow, so our minds grow too. If there would be a big garden I’d make it well decorated so our mid will also get relief there.”*



*“Only a single person in a room sitting, it creates mental illness. It’s all about the money. I could have bought a big house and big land. I Left it all in Bhutan. Always thinking of that, it makes a mental illness. If there had been a small land it would go. But we don’t have land, we don’t have anything. It makes mental illness.”*



*“When you say ‘How are you?’ no one says ‘I’m bad,’ even when I have problems inside. And it’s one of the first phrases we learn in English!.”*

*“The elder people don’t have other option than saying ‘I’m adjusted’ because likely to be inside the house with closed doors. They want to go outside and talk but language and transportation barriers. They feel like ‘What else is there I can say?’”*





**Thank You!**

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