A network linking the Quality of Urban Environments with Nature Connectedness and Health

Concept paper

Lancaster University

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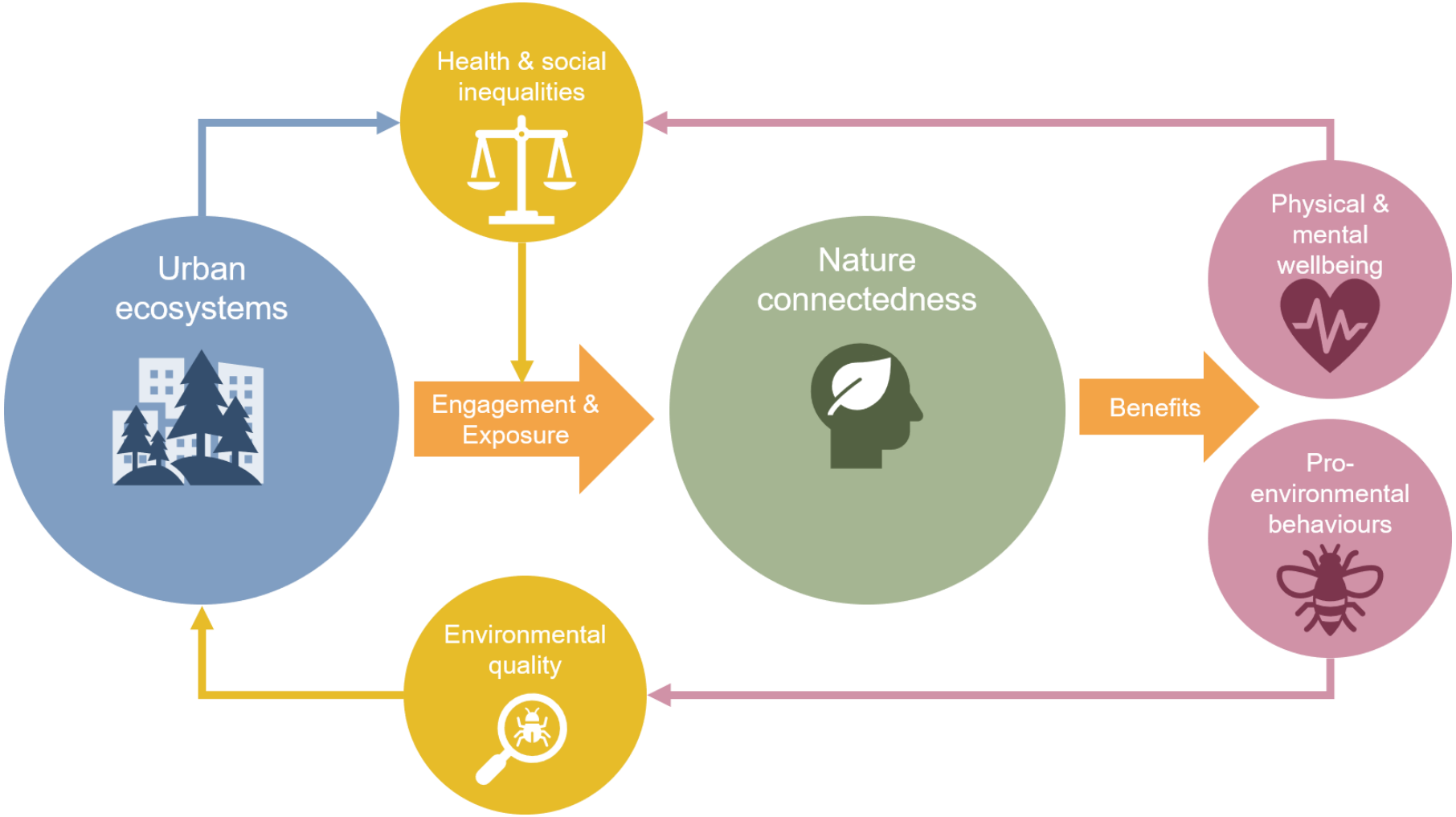
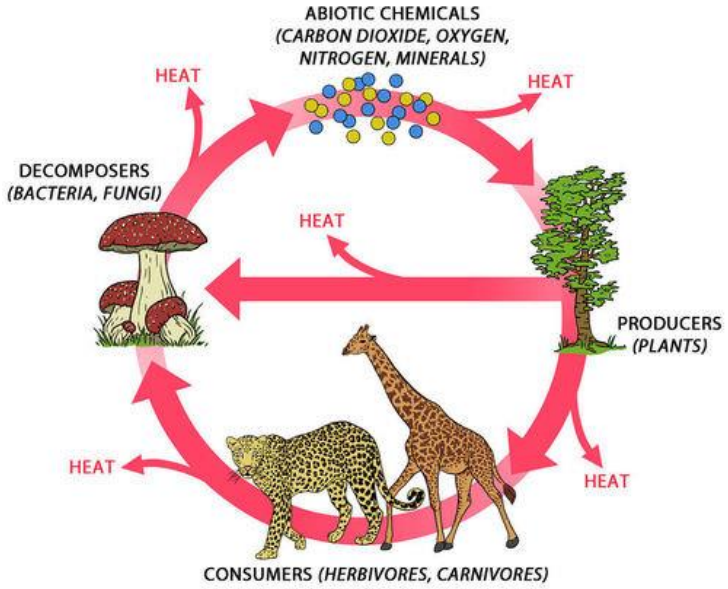
UKRI Natural Environment Research Council

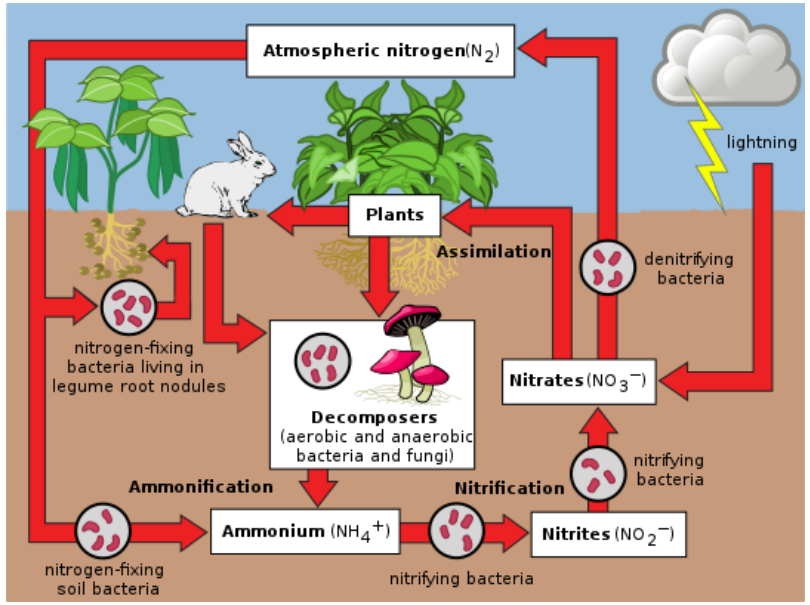
Background & context



Environmental science framework

- ‘User-independent’
- Interconnected physical, chemical and biological processes
- Flows of energy and matter
- Focus on system-level functioning
- Concepts to capture quality include ecosystem health, ecosystem integrity, soil health, water quality



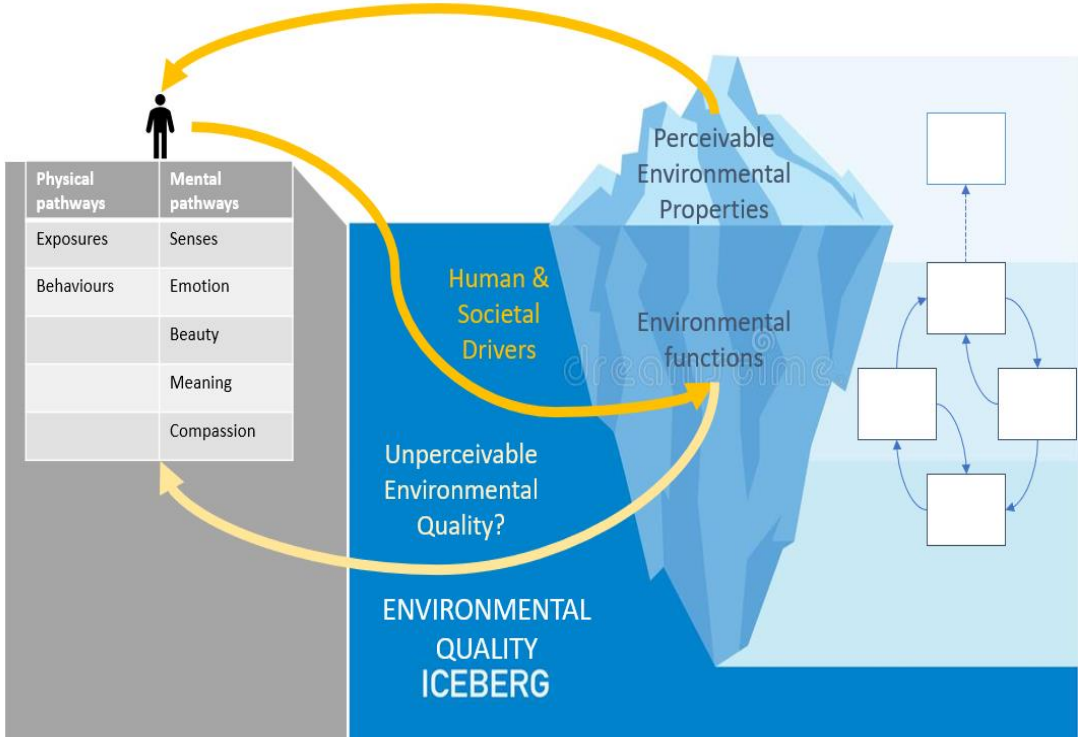


Human sciences framework

- ‘User-dependent’
- Co-produced between environmental setting and experiencing subject
- Focus on features & characteristics available to sensory perception
- Concepts to capture quality include perceived naturalness, perceived species richness, safety, sense of place, beauty

Bringing the frameworks together

- Broad lack of environmental science framework in research on health outcomes from nature
- Need to connect ecological functions – perceptible environment – nature connectedness – health
- Questions around, e.g.
  - Connecting the seen and the unseen
  - Temporalities and timescales
  - Diversity in perceptions and access



Existing reviews and models:

- Marselle et al., 2020, Pathways linking biodiversity to human health: A conceptual framework, *Environ Int,* 150**,** 106420.
- Bratman et al., 2019, Nature and mental health: An ecosystem service perspective, *Sci Adv,* 5(7)**,** eaax0903-eaax0903
- Gaston et al., 2018, Personalised ecology, *Trends Ecol Evol,* 33(12)**,** 916-925.
- Hartig et al., 2014, Nature & health, *Annual Review of Public Health,* 35**,** 207-228

Questions for reflection

- What do like about this idea?
- What don’t you like?
- What don’t you understand, what needs more clarity?
- Are there elements of either framework that you are particularly drawn to?
- Which of these frameworks do you tend to work with? Or do you work with others?
- How do they inform your work in practice?
- What are the key challenges in bringing these ways of thinking together?
- What are the key questions that need to be asked?
- What are the important gaps between these frameworks? How might they be bridged?
- Can you point to useful published papers?
- Can you provide case studies suggesting ways of tackling the problem?

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Sir Giles Gilbert Scott Suite, 22nd September 2022

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