



‘Looking for flowering trees to walk past’

A qualitative analysis of US older adults’
therapeutic landscapes during
the COVID-19 pandemic

Viveka Guzmán, Gabriela Bustamante, Lindsay Kobayashi, Jessica Finlay
vivekaguzman@rcsi.ie



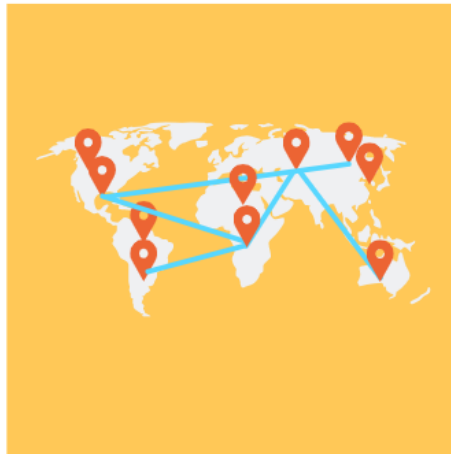
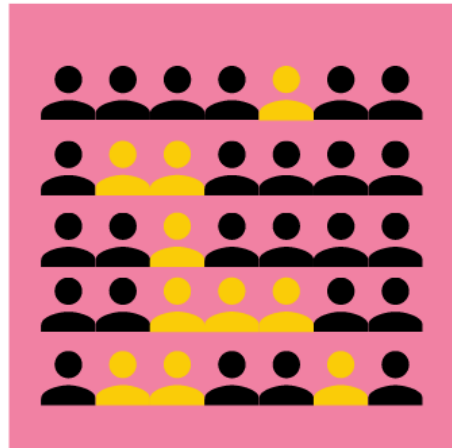
Agenda



- 1) Background
- 2) Methodology
- 3) Preliminary findings
- 4) Discussion
- 5) Take-home messages



Background [COVID-19]



Background

Nature and outdoor spaces can support **older adults** **physical**, **social** and **mental health & well-being**

What happens when public health restrictions to contain the virus include shelter-in-place orders & restrictions of movement?

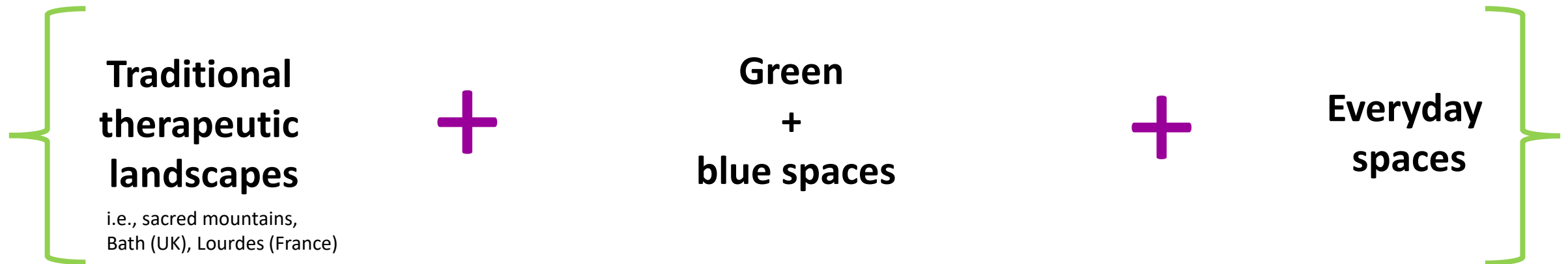
Research question:

How do older adults in the US engaged with nature & outdoor spaces during the first wave of COVID-19? What are their experiences, perceptions and behaviours?

Background

[Therapeutic Landscapes]

Conceptual framework to analyse physical, social & symbolic environments as they contribute to health & well-being in place



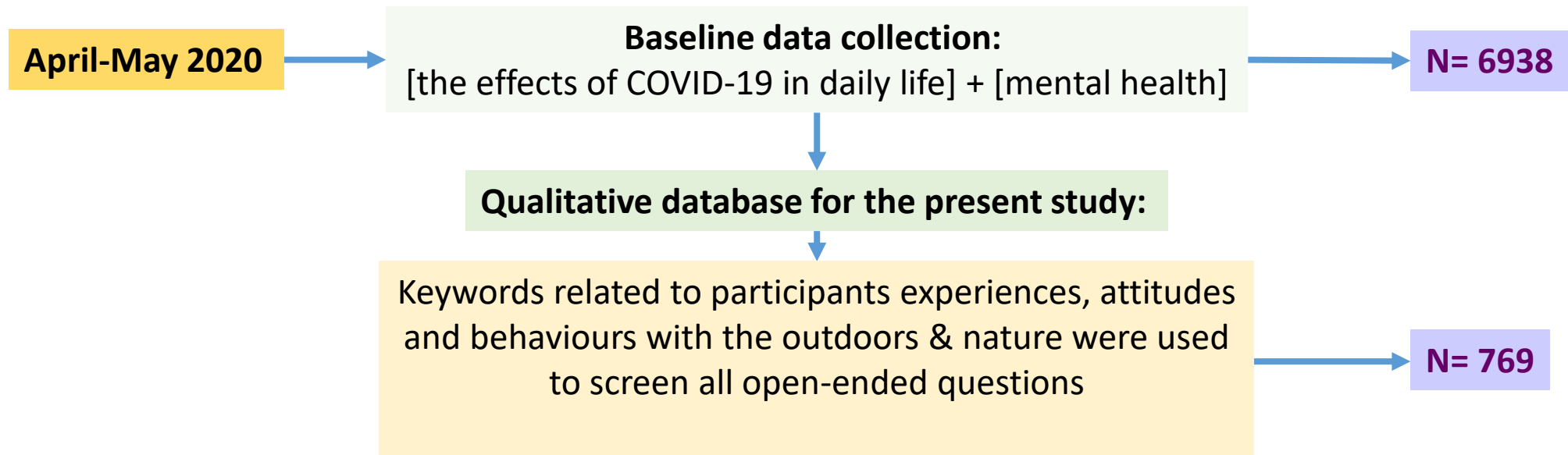
Formal and informal spaces, including, beaches, lakes, parks, gardens, balconies [and a very large etcetera]

Methodology

Data: from the COVID-19 Coping Study [mixed-methods longitudinal study]

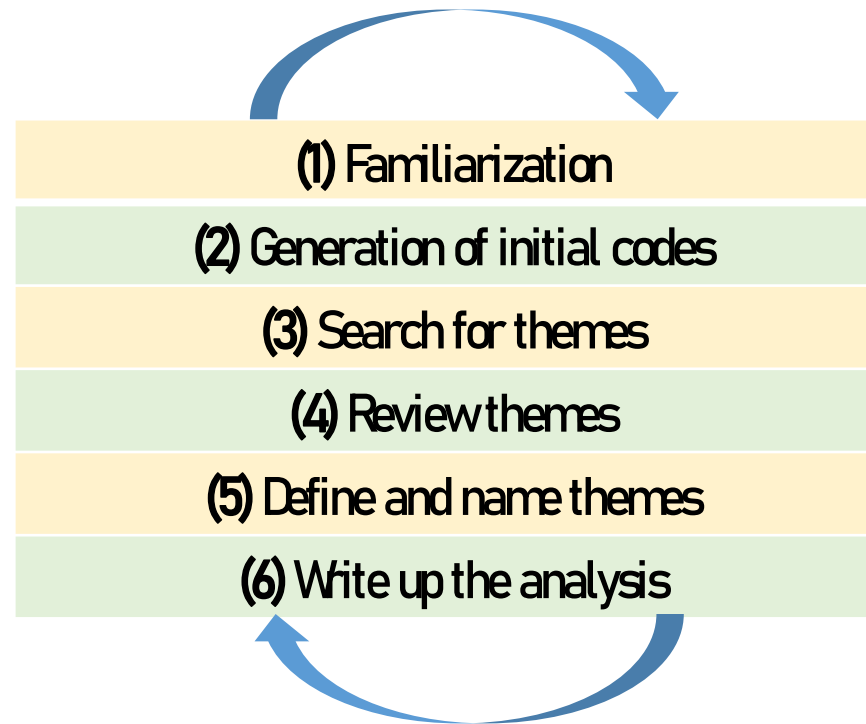
Participants: Adults based in the US, aged over 55 years old

Recruitment through online multi-frame non-probability sampling

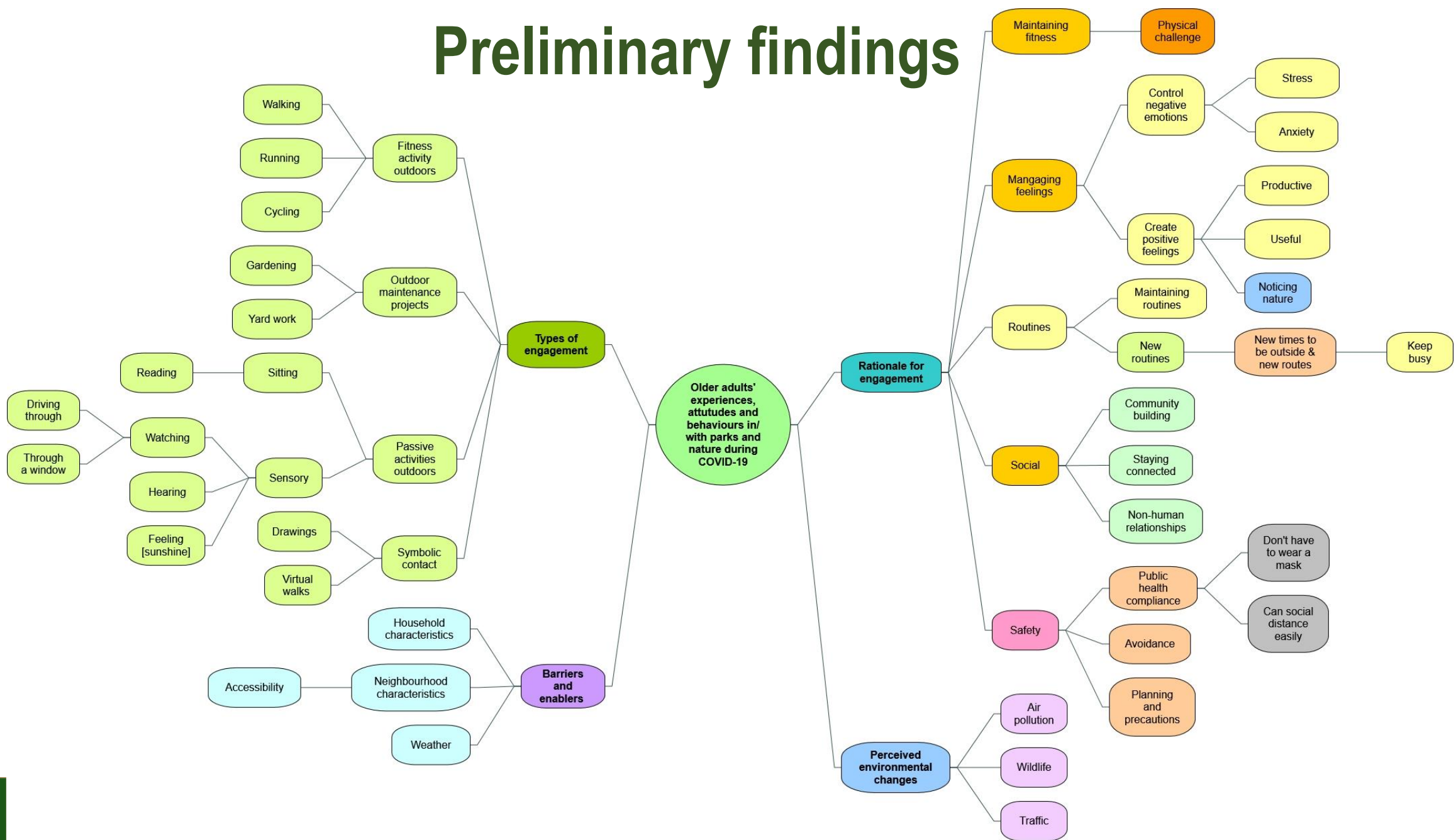


Methodology

Analysis: Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps for thematic analysis:



Preliminary findings



Preliminary findings

Older adults appreciated that outdoor spaces provided opportunities for:

Keeping... a routine

+ physical activity

+ mental activity

'The weather has been nice, so I have been able to get outside and walk in my neighbourhood. Being able to walk outside has been critical for keeping me physically and mentally active'

Preliminary findings

Older adults appreciated that outdoor spaces provided opportunities for:

Keeping...

+ social interactions

+ community service

'Make a rule to stand outside on your front porch, lawn or are and say hello to one person outside your home each day. Neighbour, mailman, garbage pick-up person, children walking by, dog walkers... doesn't matter... Ask how they're doing, remind them to stay safe. Do this everyday!'

Preliminary findings

- Certain aspects of the household, neighborhood and accessibility to nature were relevant enablers or barriers to access the outdoors.
- Weather and the perceived public health compliance of others sharing the same spaces were also important factors.

‘Living in a rural area gives my wife and I an opportunity to spend several hours outside each day, weather permitting, working on the garden and maintenance projects. We don’t have to wear masks or gloves, so we don’t even think about the coronavirus during these outdoor sessions’

Discussion

The therapeutic landscape conceptual framework has been scarcely used in the context of collective trauma such as pandemics

According to our preliminary findings older adults utilised diverse every day spaces to be in contact with nature, 'go outside and get fresh air'



Take home messages

1

Diverse settings in the natural and built environment act as well-being enablers and play an influential role in coping with the negative effects of the COVID-19 restrictions.

2

Looking through the therapeutic landscapes lens allows us to identify opportunities to develop and adapt community and environmental interventions that promote the health and wellbeing of older adults during pandemics and their aftermath.

The presenter & co-authors declare no conflict of interest.

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**Do you have any questions or comments?
We look forward to hearing from you!**

Contact



vivekaguzman@rcsi.ie



[@vivekaguzman](https://twitter.com/vivekaguzman)



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