

Professional Growth Through Birdwatching: A Natural Path to Skill Development

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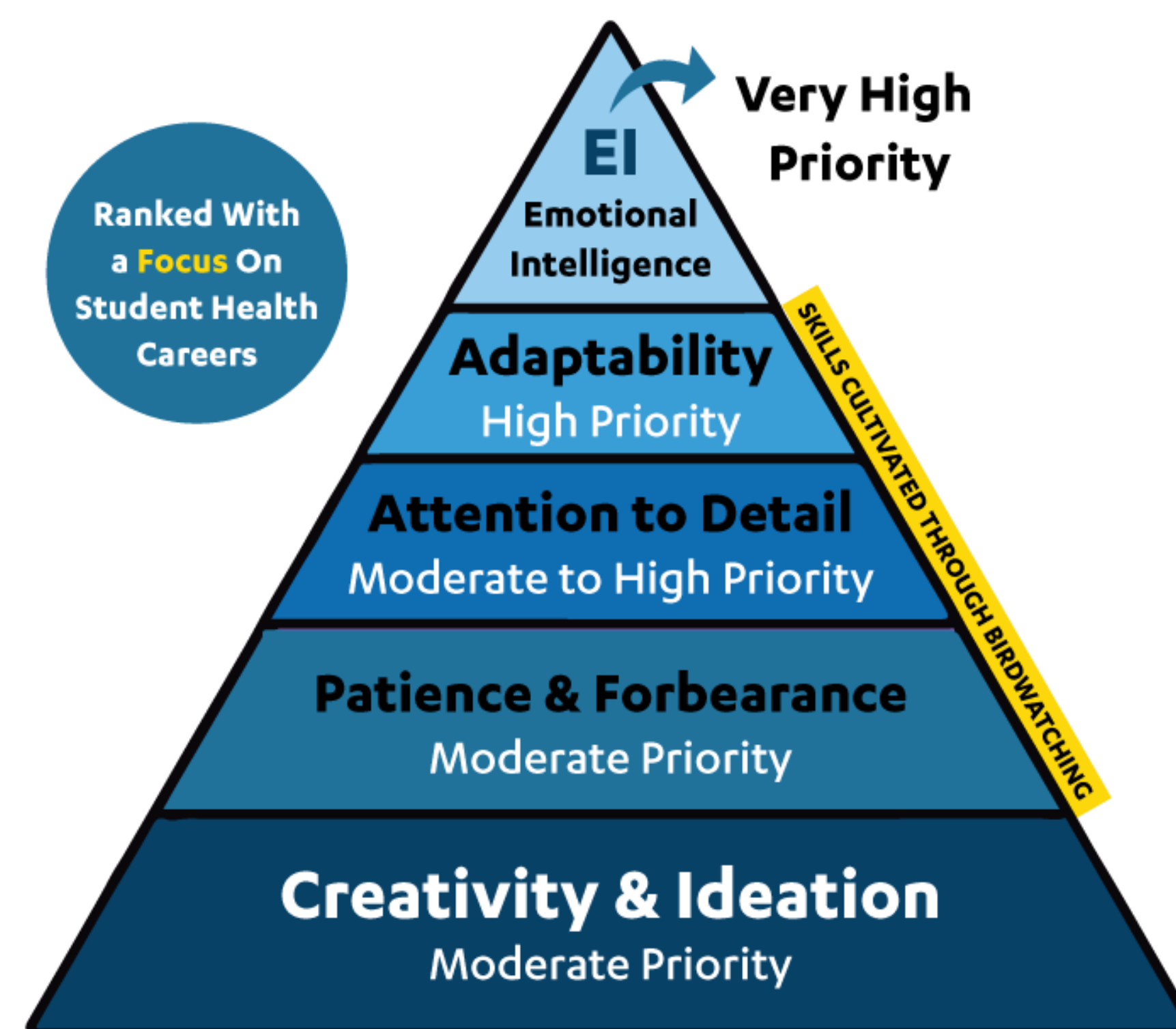


ABSTRACT & PURPOSE

ABSTRACT: It may come as no surprise that time spent in nature has various positive health effects. **But did you know that many of the professional skills prized in the fields of healthcare and higher education can be honed and improved by birdwatching?** This poster explores how integral “birder” skills (observation, critical thinking, patience, and listening) can offer a unique and rewarding way to improve mental health while fostering professional and personal growth.

PURPOSE: Recognize the positive health benefits of birdwatching and test the effects of birdwatching on your own personal and professional development.

A NATURAL PATH TO SKILL DEVELOPMENT



This is only a snapshot of some of the professional skills that birdwatching can help to foster:

Emotional Intelligence

- Fosters emotional regulation, improving interpersonal relationships, encouraging empathy, and enabling workplace harmony

Adaptability

- Unpredictability and chance nature of natural environment teaches us flexibility in lean times, and gratitude in times of abundance

Attention to Detail/ Observation

- Affects everything from better proofreading to risk management/ compliance planning, resulting in higher quality outputs

Patience

- Slow and deliberate pace of birdwatching teaches forbearance, encouraging long-game thinking and strategic decision-making

Creativity

- Exposure to nature stimulates creativity, inspiring innovation and out-of-the-box thinking in various, everyday processes

LITERATURE REVIEW

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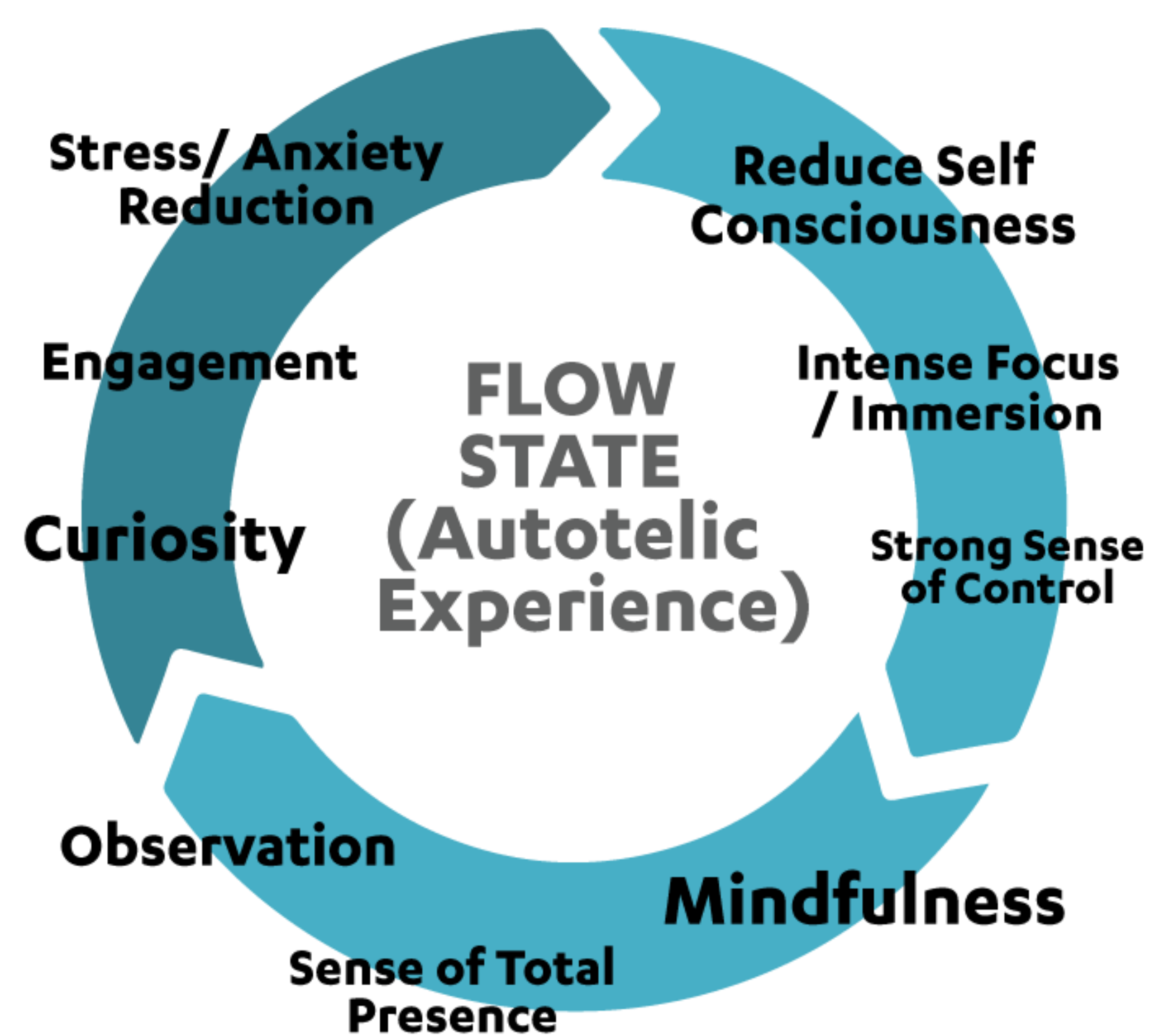
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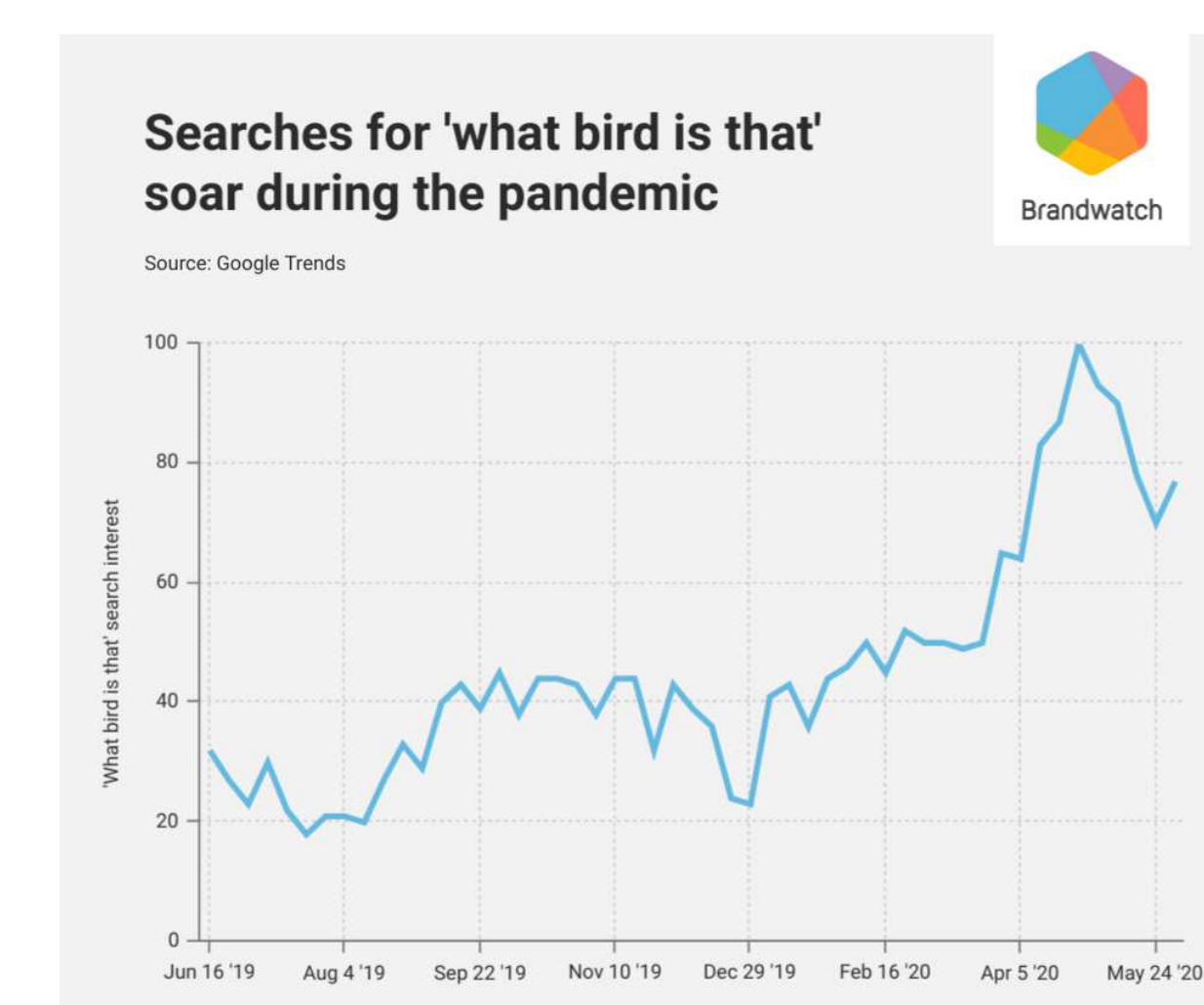
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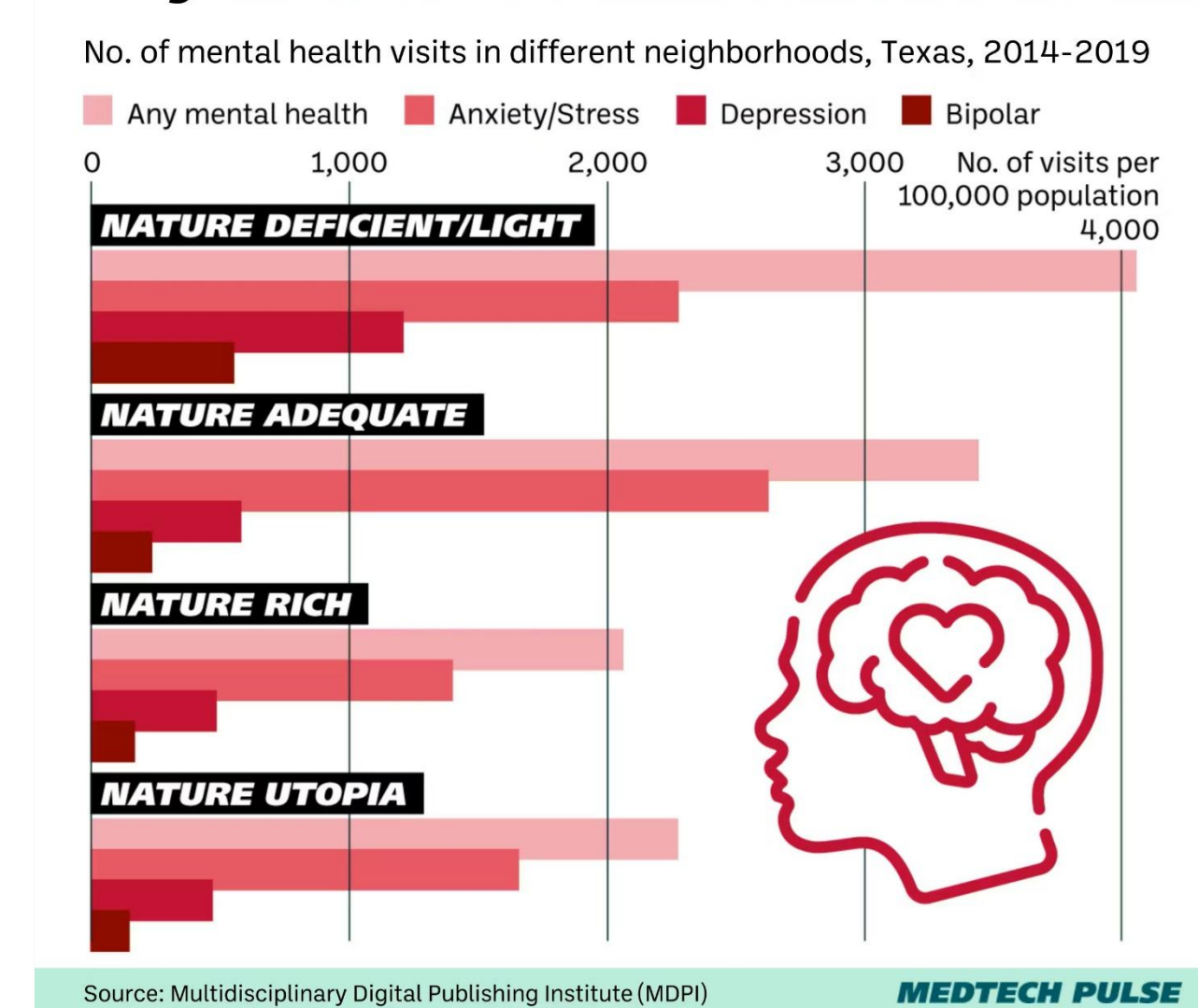
BEGINNER BIRDING



UBIQUITY OF BIRDS IN NATURE



Study finds: Spending time in nature may be linked to better mental health



- Brandwatch charted the spike in folks observing the birdsong amidst the global COVID pandemic.
- Midtech Pulse mapped the link between better mental health and nature utopias.
- PaRx is an initiative of the Canadian BC Parks Foundation designed to encourage medical providers to prescribe nature for better health outcomes for their patients.

WHAT THE DATA SHOW

COGNITIVE FUNCTION

Time in green spaces, including birdwatching settings, has been linked to improved cognitive function, mood, and memory restoration (Bratman et al., 2015).

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

A study in Human Dimensions of Wildlife found birdwatchers are significantly more likely to meet physical activity guidelines, especially when birding involves walking or hiking (Cooper et al., 2015).

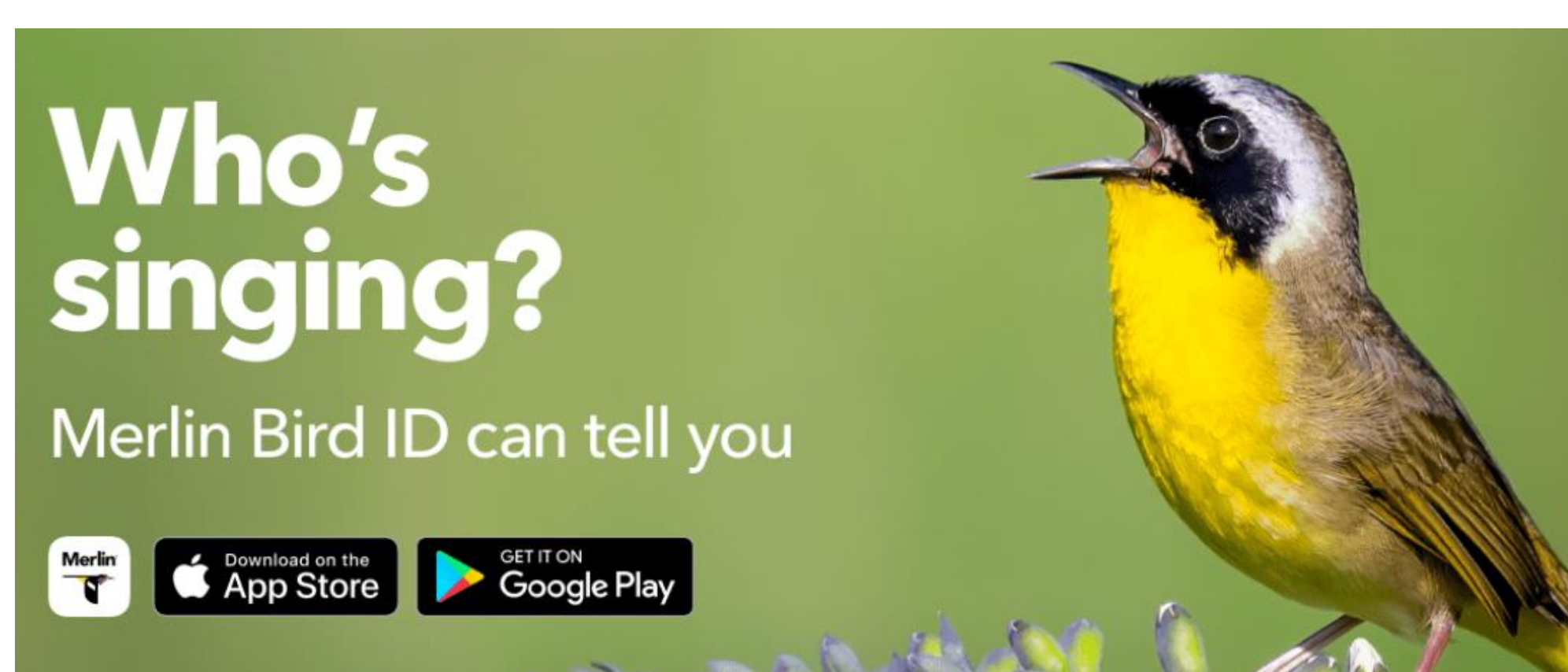
REDUCED ANXIETY

A 2022 study in Scientific Reports showed that people exposed to birdsong reported higher positive affect and reduced anxiety compared to those exposed to urban noise (Hammoud et al., 2022).

PHYSIOLOGICAL STRESS

Regular exposure to natural settings, especially those rich in birdlife, has been linked to reduced blood pressure and cortisol levels, indicating lower physiological stress (Twohig-Bennett & Jones, 2018).

- Birds are everywhere, go for a walk outdoors or set up a feeder in your outdoor space
- Requires no technology or specialized gear: An accessible, equal opportunity practice
- Great solo activity or fun to enjoy in a social environment (your choice!)



A BIRDWATCHING CHALLENGE & OTHER TOOLS



PaRx
A Prescription
for Nature

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

