

COUNSELING AND WELLNESS PRESENTS:

The Wellness Series

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WHAT IS WELLNESS?

Wellness can be seen as a balancing act between the demands and challenges from our environment and our resources, or capacity, to deal with those challenges.

When the demands and challenges that we are facing become more cumbersome than our resources, skills, or capacity to cope with them, our wellness begins to suffer.¹



Adapted from Dodge et al. 2012

NINE DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS²

- **Physical Wellness** – Consists of adequate sleep, a well-balanced diet, regular exercise, regular medical check-ups, and safe sexual health practices
- **Spiritual Wellness** – Explores the human purpose via self-reflection, connection with others, and possibly connection to the greater Universe/higher power
- **Intellectual Wellness** – Values lifelong learning, critical thinking, moral development, open-minded worldview, consistently seeking knowledge
- **Emotional Wellness** – Can identify, express, and manage an entire range of emotions and seeks assistance as necessary
- **Environmental Wellness** – Recognize the connection between nature, mankind, and the individual, and seeks to preserve and protect
- **Financial Wellness** – Manages financial state to include budgeting, saving, and working towards realistic lifestyle goals
- **Occupational Wellness** – Seeks a career which will provide personal enrichment and satisfaction, maintaining alignments with goals, values, and passions
- **Creative Wellness** – Seeks to understand the world around them via pursuits related to art, culture, and diversity of experiences
- **Social Wellness** – Have a network of support based on trust, respect, reciprocity, and empathy for the feelings of others

MAINTAINING OUR PHYSICAL WELLNESS DURING COVID-19

Nutrition – Important to immune function, how can we resist the urge to comfort ourselves with food during isolation?

Physical Activity – Gyms closed, parks closed, “stay at home”, how do we keep moving?

Sleep – Especially important to immune function and to all the other areas. How can we turn off the “noise” of what’s going on and achieve restful sleep?

Substance Use – Unhealthy coping skill + trauma can \approx dependence.

Sexual Health – Be aware of birth control shortages.

Medical/Dental/Mental Health Care – Many providers are offering telehealth services during this time (including us!).

NUTRITION³

World Health Organization – “Good nutrition is crucial for health, particularly in times when the immune system might need to fight back” (World Health Organization)

WHO recommendations – Prioritize fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, or canned)

- Cook meals at home, treat as a family activity, in person or over phone/internet
- Reduce consumption of salt, sugar, fat (avoid trans fat)
- Protein “best buys” – dried/canned pulses, fresh/frozen canned lean meats, eggs, nuts, nut butters, reduced-fat dairy, canned milk, powdered milk
- Carbohydrate “best buys” – Whole grain rice and pasta, oats, quinoa, starchy vegetables (high fiber)
- Stay hydrated! (Water! Large amounts of caffeine can lead to dehydration)

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY⁴

World Health Organization – “Physical activity and relaxation techniques can be valuable tools to help you remain calm and continue to protect your health during this time.” (World Health Organization)

WHO recommendations – 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise per week

- Schedule short activity breaks (squats on the hour, noon sit-ups, etc)
- Go on walks (outside if weather is nice), make sure to maintain physical distance
- Online fitness classes (several free options, many require no equipment)
- Utilize mindfulness, meditation, and grounding exercises to stay in touch with your body
- Remember, the gyms will re-open. You can go “all out” again when this is over. For now, just focus on maintaining daily movement and what makes your body and mind feel good

SLEEP¹¹

Impaired cognition – memory and ability to process information.

Higher levels of anxiety – raises brain's anticipatory reactions.

Stroke risk – sleep 6 hours or less/night, chance quadruples.

Increased risk for diabetes – lack of sleep increases cortisol and norepinephrine, both are associated with insulin resistance.

Increase symptoms of depression – lack of sleep disrupts neurotransmitters to the brain which regulates mood.

Increased risk of breast cancer – melatonin decreases when you are exposed to light late at night. A decrease in melatonin disrupts estrogen production which can lead to breast cancer.

Increase risk of heart disease – Blood pressure decreases when you sleep.

Weight gain – Sleep helps balance hormones and make you feel hungry and full.

Sleep fragmentation is associated with enlarged perivascular spaces (spaces around the blood vessels) in the brain = inability to clear waste resulting in neurodegenerative diseases.

SUBSTANCE USE⁵

- Marijuana, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and vaping can be particularly harmful due to the stress they can put on your pulmonary system.
- Alcohol use can negatively impact overall health, including disruption of sleep patterns, and overall weakening of the immune system.
- Unhealthy food choices also fit in here, as many folks might seek to “self-medicate” with oversized portions of high-fat, high-sugar food and beverages.
- Also be mindful of caffeine use, especially in the afternoon as it can disrupt sleep. Consider switching to decaf, herbal tea, or water in place of those afternoon cups.
- Ensure appropriate use of prescribed medications. Avoid any misuse of these drugs, including use of illegal substances or those not prescribed to you.

SEXUAL HEALTH⁶

- Covid-19 is likely NOT sexually transmitted, HOWEVER:
- The virus CAN be spread through coughing and sneezing, up to 6 feet.
- The virus CAN spread through saliva (therefore easily transmitted by kissing).
- Plainly stated, avoid close personal contact (including sex) with anyone who is not in your immediate household during this pandemic.
- Be sure to maintain your regular good health sexual practices, including birth control.

MEDICAL/DENTAL/MENTAL HEALTHCARE

- Utilize telehealth appointments to maintain necessary medical appointments/treatments.
- Pharmacies may be backlogged during this time, so call for refills well in advance if possible. Try to have several weeks of meds on hand.
- Most dental clinics are emergency-only right now, so oral health is more important than ever.
- Do not neglect your mental health! Most clinicians are still providing services, including telephone and HIPPA protected Zoom sessions.
- Contact Rocky, Bethany, or Amy if you would like to schedule a session with us. We will continue offering services through this pandemic.

THEY ALL WORK TOGETHER

- **Physical Wellness** – The motivation to eat healthy, exercise, and take care of yourself often depends on your wellness in other areas of your life.
- **Spiritual Wellness** – Taking walks in nature is a good way to combine your physical and spiritual wellness, what other ways can you think of?
- **Intellectual Wellness** – Studying the impact of various foods and movements on your body is a good way to combine your physical and intellectual wellness
- **Emotional Wellness** – Emotional distress can often lead to poor self-care and decisions which negatively impact our physical wellness
- **Environmental Wellness** – Consider the ways environmental factors can impact our physical wellness.
- **Financial Wellness** – How does your financial state impact the decisions you make in regards to food, exercise, and recreational activity?
- **Occupational Wellness** – Think about the ways in which your career goals are impacted by your physical wellness, and how they can complement one another.
- **Creative Wellness** – What unique, fun, and outside the box ideas can you think of to improve your physical wellness?
- **Social Wellness** – Think about the ways in which the people you surround yourself with impact your physical wellness.



IN CONCLUSION⁷

Create Balance – Engage in activities and relationships which positively impact multiple dimensions of wellness

Embrace Support from others – Especially right now! Physically distance, but maintain social connection through phone, email, chat, text, Facetime, etc

Develop healthy **routines** and habits – Take small steps to improve your health: walk a little more, drink more water, meditate a few minutes, the little things add up!

Utilize **SAMHSA handouts** to write down ways you can improve your physical health

Remember that the **effect is cumulative**. The steps you take now to improve your physical health and wellness will build your overall wellness for the future!

Questions??

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