

ELEMENTS OF WELLNESS



Intellectual Wellness is the ability to open our minds to new ideas and experiences that can be applied to personal decisions, group interaction and community betterment. The desire to learn new concepts, improve skills and seek challenges in pursuit of lifelong learning contributes to our intellectual wellness.

- Learning because you want to – not because you are told to. Doing the work assigned.
- Learning through varied experiences – reading, writing, sharing and exploration
- Observing what is around you
- Listening & Questioning
- Finding applications for material learned in the classroom
- Staying current with world affairs/news
- Exposing yourself to new experiences (e.g. arts, theater)
- Reading Books & Newspapers
- Staying interested in community activities
- Expand the knowledge of others



Emotional Wellness is the ability to understand ourselves and cope with the challenges life can bring. The ability to acknowledge and share feelings of anger, fear, sadness or stress; hope, love, joy and happiness in a productive manner contributes to our emotional wellness.

- Keeping a positive attitude
- Being sensitive to your feelings and the feelings of others
- Learning to cope with stress
- Being realistic about your expectations and time
- Taking responsibility for your own behavior
- Dealing with your personal issues realistically
- Viewing challenges as opportunities rather than obstacles
- Functioning independently but knowing when you need to ask for help
- Have the capacity to nurture themselves and others, and accept nurturing from others
- Have a developed sense of self, an understanding of who they are



Environmental Wellness is the ability to recognize our own responsibility for the quality of the air, the water and the land that surrounds us. The ability to make a positive impact on the quality of our environment, be it our homes, our communities or our planet contributes to our environmental wellness.

- Being aware of the natural environment you live in
- Recognizing opportunities that lead you to new skills and acting on those opportunities
- Working to ensure the stability and longevity of our natural resources
- Participating in activities that protect the environment



The sexually well person accepts his or her sexual orientation, engages in sexual relationships that are consistent with his or her values and development, and refrains from using sex to manipulate or influence others. In addition, s/he minimizes unwanted consequences through communication and protection and contributes to our **Sexual Wellness**.

It is important to remember that any attempts to establish “norms” and an objective definition of sexual health is dangerous in that they could be used to exclude or label people as unhealthy or abnormal.

From a holistic perspective, sexual health includes emotional, psychological, physical, intellectual and spiritual dimensions. The following are characteristics of sexually healthy adults however sexual health is developed over a life-span, from cradle to grave. Integrating sexuality into one’s life in a balanced way is a life-time endeavor.

Communication

- Interact with all genders in appropriate and respectful ways
- Ask questions of other adults about sexual issues, when necessary
- Are able to clearly communicate and negotiate your sexual limits
- Are able to honor others’ sexual limits with openness and acceptance
- Can physically and verbally express feelings of attraction, desire and intimacy in a variety of ways (ex: holding, caressing, kissing, do things that awaken desire in partner, etc.)
- Are sensitive to non-verbal cues of others’ boundaries and limits

Relationships

- Develop friendships that do not have a sexual agenda
- Choose partners who are responsible, trustworthy, safe and giving

Self-Esteem, Self-Worth

- Can touch their own bodies without feeling shame or disgust
- Have an understanding that sexual experiences can be integrated into one’s life in positive and healthy ways
- Allow themselves to experience pleasurable sensual and sexual feelings
- Feel joy in sexual experiences of their choosing
- Are comfortable with their sexual identity and orientation

Education

- Realize the consequences of sexual activity
- Comprehend the impact of media messages on thoughts, feelings, values, and behaviors related to sexuality
- Respect the right of all people to enjoy and engage in the full range of consensual, non-exploitive sexual behaviors

Contraception, Protection, Body Integrity

- Take responsibility for their own bodies and their own orgasms
- If sexually active, use contraception effectively to avoid unplanned pregnancy and use condoms and safer sex to avoid contracting or spreading a sexually transmitted disease

Spirituality

- Honor the sacred aspect of sexual union
- Understand that sexual energy is not separate from being human



Social Wellness is the ability to relate to and connect with other people in our world and being comfortable with and liking yourself as a person. Our ability to establish and maintain positive relationships with family, friends and co-workers contributes to our social wellness.

- Interacting easily with people of different ages, backgrounds, races, and lifestyles.
- Contributing time and energy to the betterment of your community.
- Communicating your feelings
- Developing friendships that are beneficial and non-exploitive
- Recognizing a need for “fun” time in your life
- Budgeting and balancing your time to include both responsibilities and relaxation



Occupational Wellness is the ability to get personal fulfillment from our jobs or our chosen career fields while still maintaining balance in our lives. Our desire to contribute in our careers to make a positive impact on the organizations we work in and to society as a whole leads to occupational wellness.

- Finding satisfaction and worth in your work
- Ensuring your work environment and relationships are comfortable
- Finding ways to improve at work through skill development and active learning
- Ability to make choices that foster positive attitudes toward work and your co-workers will enhance your personal and professional satisfaction and promote lifelong learning
- Requires knowing enough about yourself to choose a rewarding and fulfilling occupation consistent with your personal interests, values and beliefs



Optimal **Physical Wellness** is developed through the combination of beneficial physical activity/exercise and healthy eating habits. Developing physical wellness empowers you to be able to monitor your own vital signs and understand your body's warning signs. The physical benefits of looking good and feeling terrific most often lead to the psychological benefits of enhanced self-esteem, self-control, determination and a sense of direction.

- Exercise regularly
- Eat properly
- Avoid the use of tobacco, illicit drugs, and excess alcohol
- Develop an appreciation of your body
- Practice health-promoting behaviors, such as regular physical checkups, breast or testicular self-exams, regular and routine testing for STD



Spiritual Wellness is a personal matter involving values and beliefs that provide a purpose in our lives. While different individuals may have different views of what spiritualism is, it is generally considered to be the search for meaning and purpose in human existence, leading one to strive for a state of harmony with oneself and others while working to balance inner needs with the rest of the world. Being open to different cultures, religions, and spiritual philosophies.

- Spending time defining personal values and ethics and making decisions that complement them
- Spending time alone in personal reflection
- Participating in spiritual activities
- Caring about the welfare of others and acting out of that care