Dimensions of Wellness

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Wellness

- What is wellness?
The National Wellness Institute explains wellness:

(\textit{along with the help of leaders in health and wellness})

- \textit{Wellness is a conscious, self-directed and evolving process of achieving full potential}
- \textit{Wellness is multi-dimensional and holistic, encompassing lifestyle, mental and spiritual well-being, and the environment}
- \textit{Wellness is positive and affirming.}
- \textit{Wellness is an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence.}
Why Wellness with Older Adults?

The International Council on Active Aging states that Over the past 100 years we have added an additional 30 plus years to life expectancy.

The challenge now is to ensure quality of life during these years.

Quality of life is a top concern for aging adults

- losing their health (73%),
- losing the ability to take care of oneself (70%),
- losing mental abilities (69%) and
- running out of money (60%)

Source: 2005 poll by USAToday/ABC
Using Wellness to Guide our Efforts with Older Adults

- As we are working to improve the lives of older adults, we must see health education as an opportunity to increase the health and well-being of our communities in a holistic sense. Many times we tend to view health promotion and disease prevention as solely about the physical dimension. As we take a look at the eight dimensions, we can explore how to best meet the needs of the individuals we serve.
Wellness: A Holistic Approach to Health

• In order to achieve optimal wellness, one must have a balance within each of the dimensions. Each dimension has an impact on the other, and ultimately our entire overall wellbeing. Every individual has their own unique balance to these areas.
7 Dimensions of Wellness Model

- Physical
- Spiritual
- Social
- Vocational
- Intellectual
- Emotional
- Environmental

* Note: 6, 7, 8 dimensions of wellness models
Physical Wellness

- The ability to maintain a healthy quality of life that allows us to get through our daily activities without undue fatigue or physical stress.

- The ability to recognize that our behaviors have a significant impact on our wellness and adopting healthful habits (routine check ups, a balanced diet, exercise, etc) while avoiding destructive habits (tobacco, drugs, alcohol, etc...
Physical Wellness:
Tips and Facts

- There are few things you can do that have a more profound effect on more bodily systems than exercise.

- When you do vigorous exercise, every body system revs up: metabolic, biochemical, hormonal, temperature regulation, function and cardiovascular respiration.”

-Dr. Steven Blair
Physical Wellness: Tips and Facts

- **Physical activity...**

  - prevents or controls the most common chronic diseases (for example, diabetes and heart disease),
  
  - enables people to function independently so they enjoy and grow in their lives, and
  
  - allows them to stay part of the active lives of their children, grandchildren and communities.
"If we had a pill that contained all of the benefits of exercise, it would be the most widely prescribed drug in the world."

Ronald M. Davis, M.D., AMA President.

Residents in a nursing home ages 72 – 98 who completed a 10 week strength training program saw increases of 113%

Source: New England Journal of Medicine
What can Physical Wellness Support Look Like?

Elements to include in a fitness program

* 2-3 times a week strength training
* 150 minutes a week, cardiovascular exercises
* Appropriate breathing techniques
* Flexibility, balance and coordination
* Range of motion movements, along with appropriate assessments and screening
* Proper nutrition and weight control
Spiritual Wellness

• The ability to establish peace and harmony in our lives.

• The ability to develop congruency between values and actions and to realize a common purpose that binds creation together.
What can Spiritual Wellness support look like?

- Programs that encourage participants to...
  - be in the moment:
    - listen to the sounds of nature,
    - smell the fragrance of the outdoors.

- Remind them that this time is theirs and by taking part in this experience they are improving their health and well-being.
Social Wellness

- The ability to relate to and connect with other people in our world.

- Our ability to establish and maintain positive relationships with family, friends and co-workers contributes to our Social Wellness.
Social Wellness: Tips and Facts

- Socially isolated people are more susceptible to illness and have a death rate two to three times higher than those who are not socially isolated.
- People who maintain their social network and support systems do better under stress.
- Approximately 20 percent of Americans feel lonely and isolated during their free time.
- Touching and hugging can improve health.
- Laughter really is good medicine.
- Cholesterol levels go up when human companionship is lacking.
- Warm, close friendships cause higher levels of immunoglobulin A (an antibody that helps keep away respiratory infections and cavities).
- A strong social network can create a good mood and enhance self-esteem.
Vocational (Occupational) Wellness

- The ability to get personal fulfillment from our jobs or our chosen career fields, as well as volunteer activities, while still maintaining balance in our lives.

- Our desire to contribute in our careers and activities – in order to make a positive impact on the organizations we work in, community we live in, and the society as a whole.
For optimal Vocational Wellness:

- Explore a variety of career or volunteer options
- Create a vision for your future
- Choose activities that suit your personality, interests, and talents
- Visit a career planning center
- Be open to change and learn new skills
Examples of vocationally-well people:

- Pursuing ongoing awareness of values, strengths and passions through purposeful reflection

- Cultivating a personal understanding of meaning and purpose in one’s life that balances personal ambition with service to the world and others

- Expressing values, strengths and passions through work and service to the world

- Continuously learning new skills and seeking challenges that lead to personal growth and a better world

- Continually assessing life priorities to maintain balance, including cultivating the ability to say “no” to some opportunities

- Understanding that listening for and following vocational calling is a lifelong process
Intellectual Wellness

- 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 concept, improve skills and seek challenges in pursuit of lifelong learning.
Challenging the mind as we age is crucial to staving off diseases like Alzheimer’s.

A 2009 study adds to a growing body of evidence that mentally challenging activities like word games, playing cards, reading and writing may delay the rapid memory loss that occurs with Alzheimer’s disease.

The majority of older people are keen to learn new skills:

- 59% interested in learning about the internet & digital television
- 73% want courses on how to stay healthy and active
- 58% want financial advice and tips on managing money

The research, commissioned by Help The Aged, **warned that one in three older people now felt out of touch with modern life.**
Emotional Wellness

- 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.
Emotional Wellness:
Tips and Facts

- Depression—will be the second greatest cause of premature death and disability worldwide by 2020.
  
  SOURCE: World Health Organization

- Happiness leads to low blood pressure

Source: The University of Warwick (February 2007)
Emotional Wellness: Tips and Facts

- Research shows that older people can literally “think” themselves into the grave by feeling “bad” about getting old.

- Study participants who said they had more positive views about aging lived an average 7.6 years longer than those with negative perceptions of aging.

- Source: Yale University
Emotional Wellness:
Tips and Facts

- Programs that support this dimension can have a profound effect on the lives of many older adults;

- Exercise
- Mind-body exercise classes
- Spa services
- Stress management workshops or counseling
- Behavioral modification classes or counseling
- Humor workshops
- Music therapy
- Support groups and social events are only a few such programs
Environmental Wellness

- 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, communities, workplace or the planet.
Environmental Wellness: Tips and Facts

- Recycle: Use paper, glass, and aluminum recycling bins in your community.
- Volunteer in your community.
- Save water: Turn off the water when brushing your teeth, shaving, or washing the dishes. Fill the sink with water as opposed to letting the faucet run.
- Help a stranger.
Are you Balancing the Dimensions of Wellness?

Take this on-line quiz to see how you are doing

http://www.uwsp.edu/HPHD/EmpWell/wellQuiz/

Example: GWAAR Employee Wellness “Dimensions of Wellness” Challenge
Questions? Comments?

Thank you!

National Wellness Institute
International Council on Active Aging
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