



Dimensions of Wellness

Emotional wellness, according to the National Center for Emotional Wellness, refers to an awareness, understanding, and acceptance of your emotions. It is the ability to be attentive to and accept both positive and negative emotions you might be feeling as well as how to appropriately handle them. Once you are able to accept how you are feeling you will better be able to decide how to react in response to those feelings and understand why you react how you do. This may allow you to have better control of your emotions in response to future challenges. One can improve upon their emotional wellness by:

- Explore how you treat others and how others treat you, what do you like about those interactions and what do you dislike about them
- Practice gratitude

Occupational wellness refers to the ability to find personal satisfaction and enrichment through one's work. It also represents the ability to find a balance between work and leisure in a way that promotes health. Occupational wellness can also be found in performing work that represents one's values while improving the wellbeing of others. One can improve upon their occupational wellness by:

- Explore which parts of your job you enjoy and which you do not
- Use your occupational skills to perform volunteer work to help others
- Set realistic career goals and work toward accomplishing them

Intellectual wellness refers to being able to participate in stimulating mental activities. This can involve being able to expand your knowledge and skills in areas of interest or sharing your knowledge and skills with others who share your interest. It can be useful in keeping an open mind about new ideas and skills as well as learning about new cultures and environments. One can build their intellectual wellness by:

- Read something for fun, unrelated to your normal medical readings
- Learn a foreign language
- Play board games or work on puzzles such as crosswords or sudoku

Environmental wellness promotes living a lifestyle that is respectful of one's surroundings through promotion of interaction with nature and one's personal environment. This permits you to be aware of how the environment affects you every day and how your actions affect the environment. Commitment to actions that will have a positive impact upon this relationship can have lasting benefits on your wellbeing. Some ways to improve your environmental wellness include:

- Make recycling a part of your life
- Spend time outdoors as much as possible

- Volunteer with environmental organizations

Financial wellness involves knowledge of managing one's finances to avoid stress related to financial hardship, whether this be job loss, unexpected expenses, or debt burden. This requires keeping track of expenses, making a budget, and not making unnecessary expenses. This can be particularly challenging in medical school and residency when income is limited compared to one's overall debt but building smart habits during these times can pay off in the future. One can build these skills by:

- Keeping records of finances including all income and expenses
- Planning ahead for large purchases and being able to adjust one's budget to compensate
- Develop long-term financial goals and a plan for reaching them

Social wellness is having healthy, nurturing, and supportive relationships that can help support one during difficult times. Building these relationships and maintaining a connection with those around you can help with feeling more connected to others as well. Having a positive social network surrounding you can also help build self-esteem. You can develop your social wellness by:

- Exploring the positive and negative aspects of your relationships with others and determining how you can incorporate more of the positive aspects and limiting the negative aspects
- Make an effort to keep in touch with friends and family
- Join a club or organization that shares your interests

Spiritual wellness is the ability to find meaning in life's events and in defining our life's purpose. Spiritual wellness is often related to religious faith although it does not need to be sought through this path and can instead reflect one's approach to values, ethics, and morals. Having insight into these can help you give meaning to your daily activities and give a deeper purpose to your life. You can improve your spiritual wellness by:

- When you experience a profoundly positive event, take time to think about how it fits into a greater purpose you have defined for yourself
- Spend time in prayer or meditation/relaxation every day
- Practice discussing your spiritual beliefs with others as well as learning about their beliefs, openness and acceptance are key to spiritual wellness

Physical wellness is optimal health and function of our bodies. This is perhaps the most easily understood aspect of wellness with well known solutions that are often not pursued due to lack of motivation, pain limiting participation in activity, or scheduling challenges as exercise and healthy eating require time commitment every day. You can improve your physical wellbeing by:

- Commit to physical activity every day, even if only 15-30 minutes a day
- Take steps toward a healthy diet by avoiding fast food and cooking your own meals whenever possible