



World Health Organization

Office of Caribbean Programme Coordination



Caribbean Private Sector Response to Chronic Diseases (Port-of-Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, 8–9 May 2008)

What is health and wellness?

The Seven Dimensions of Wellness

Health Promotion, as defined by the *American Journal of Health Promotion*, is the science and art of helping people change their lifestyle toward an optimal state of health.

Health Protection is defined as those professional activities designed to prevent or reduce occupational illness and injury as well as enhance health and well-being.

Wellness is defined as a dynamic process of becoming aware of and making conscious choices toward a more balanced and healthy lifestyle. It includes learning new life skills that address both the positive and negative aspects of human existence. Over the past decade, the concept of wellness has expanded into seven dimensions. These dimensions are illustrated in the SPECIES model.

Species

(Social, Physical, Emotional, Career, Intellectual, Environmental, Spiritual)

Social Wellness is the process of creating and maintaining healthy relationships through the choices we make. It embraces relationships at home and work, friendships, and our relationships with all people and future generations. The social dimension encourages contributing to your human and physical environment for the common welfare of your community.

Physical Wellness is the process of making choices to create flexible, cardiovascularly fit, energetic, strong bodies. The choices we make are related to exercise, nutrition, rest and sleep, intentional and responsible sexual choices, stress management, management of injury and illness, and the responsible use of alcohol and other drugs.

Emotional Wellness is the process of accepting our worth, creating, recognizing, and expressing our feelings, and talking to ourselves in healthy ways. Creating and maintaining a positive, realistic self-concept is also part of this process, as is realistically assessing potential and limitations. Emotional wellness also includes the practice of talking about feelings--fear, anger, sadness, and joy, and selecting healthy behavioral expressions of those feelings.

Career Wellness is the process of making and maintaining choices related to work which include choosing a job for which we are well-suited, well-trained, and from which we gain satisfaction. It also includes staying current in one's chosen field, helping to create a healthy organizational environment which contributes to your own and others' well-being. Career wellness also requires balancing work with the rest of your life.

Intellectual Wellness is the process of using our minds to create a greater understanding and appreciation of the universe and ourselves. Intellectual wellness is not dependent on intelligence or ability; rather it requires making connections, appreciating natural connections, examining one's opinions and judgments, and questioning.

Environmental Wellness is the process of making choices which will contribute to sustaining or improving the quality of life in the universe. This dimension includes responsible choices regarding the use of air, water, land and energy so that future generations of each species may survive and thrive. The recognition of interdependence of humans, other animals, plants and all of nature is a central tenet of environmental wellness.

Spiritual Wellness is the process of discovering meaning and purpose in life, and demonstrating values through behaviors. Spiritual wellness includes acceptance of the concepts of wholeness, unity, diversity, individual uniqueness, and the need for community as well as personal responsibility to oneself and that community.