




CONNECTING THE DOTS


The Dimensions of Wellness

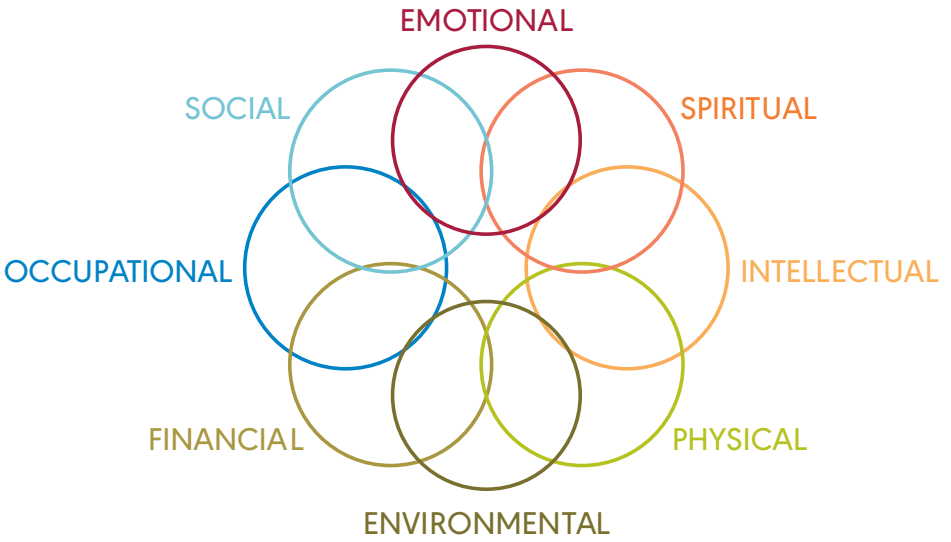


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Wellness is about the integration of all states of physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Each of the eight dimensions of wellness act and interact in ways that contribute to our quality of life. The following pages describe these dimensions, providing you with activities to try out in your workplace or your life. By focusing on keeping each aspect healthy and vibrant, you'll witness its impact on your own wellness, that of your workplace and beyond!





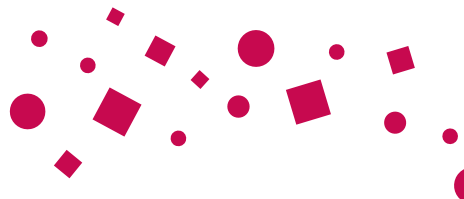
Swarbrick, M. (2006). A wellness approach. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 29,(4) 311- 3314.

Emotional Wellness

Emotional wellness is a measure of the well-being of our thoughts and feelings. Being emotionally healthy includes knowing and loving yourself, identifying and better managing stress levels, having a bright outlook on life and more. So how do you go about achieving this kind of positive emotional wellness? Read through the activities below for ideas to get you and your colleagues started on the journey.

GIVE IT A GO!

- ▶ **Keep connected.** Take a refreshing break with a friend at work or start a staff meeting by taking a short walk around the block together. Having positive social relationships at work can help restore and maintain emotional wellness. Check out The Sandbox's useful blog about this topic by visiting TheWellnessSandbox.ca and searching "making connections."
- ▶ **Recognize causes of stress.** Identify what's causing you stress—whether it's work, financial issues, personal relationships or something else entirely—because it's the first step towards developing strategies to manage those stressors. The Canadian Mental Health Association provides some useful strategies for addressing stress head-on at cmha.ca; just search "stress."
- ▶ **Seek support.** If you or your colleagues needed help maintaining your emotional well-being, would you know where to go? Be prepared by making a list of available resources and services which support your emotional wellness. There are many health professionals in your community who can help, or you may choose to access your Employee and Family Assistance Program.







Spiritual Wellness

Although many people equate spiritual wellness with religion, they don't have to be one-in-the-same. Whether it's a meaningful connection to nature or a higher power within the universe, this connection can provide purpose and fulfillment in life, impacting overall health, well-being and quality of life. Since what moves people spiritually differs from person to person, encourage your workplace to try a variety of activities so individuals can discover what restores their own sense of peace.

GIVE IT A GO!

- ▶ **Build a spiritual toolkit.** This toolkit could include activities that will encourage self-connection and improved resiliency. Here are some examples to consider: quiet time for thinking, reading an inspirational book, playing a sport or musical instrument, creating or appreciating art, attending a religious service, participating in volunteer work, helping a person in need, meditating, taking a nature walk, doing yoga or practicing mindfulness.
- ▶ **Visualize spirituality.** In order to connect with and foster spirituality, you and your colleagues must each understand what your own spirituality looks like. To help achieve this, visit mayoclinic.org and search "discovering your spirituality" and answer the questions listed near the end of the article on your own.



Intellectual Wellness

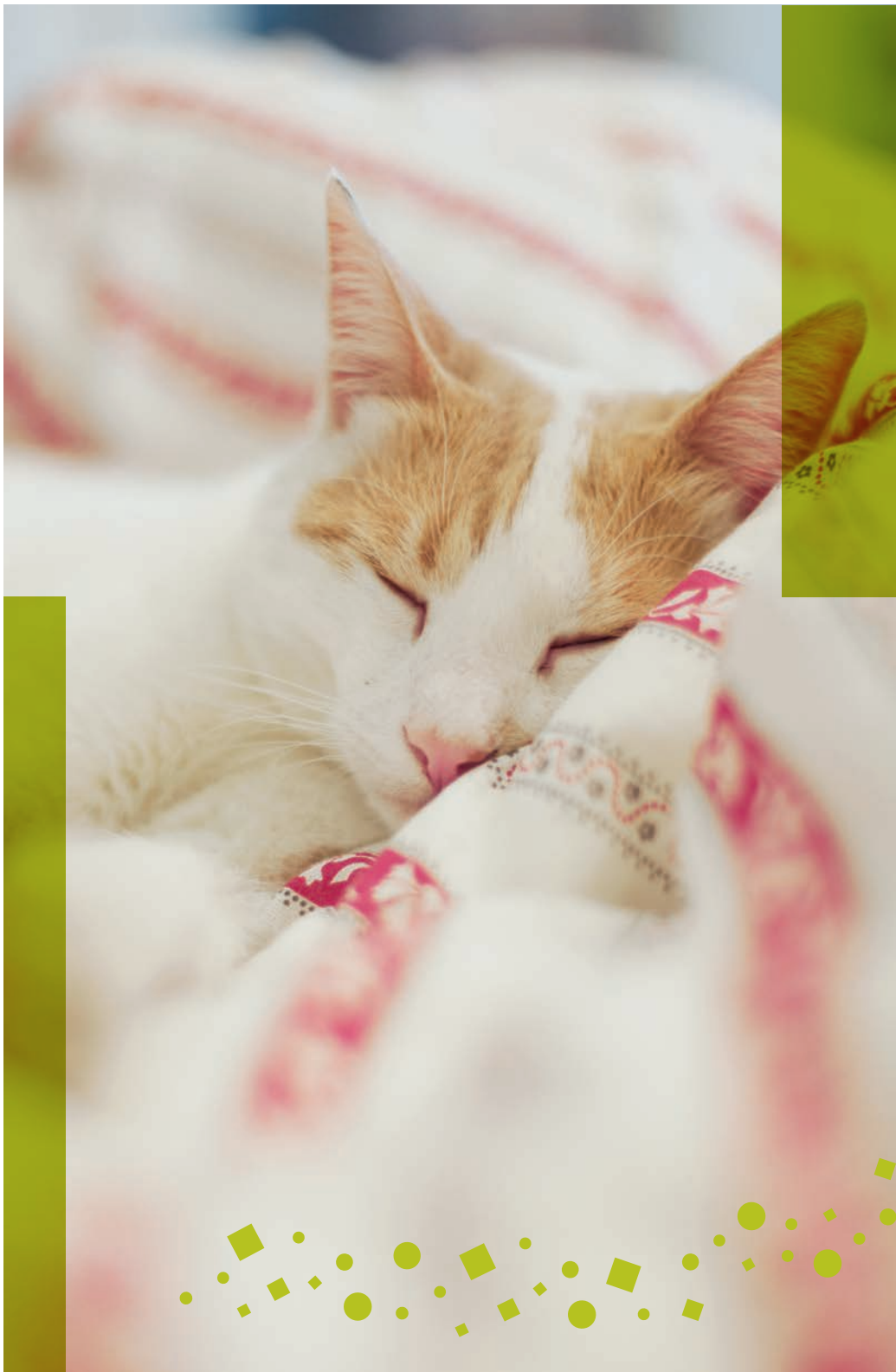
Intellectual wellness promotes creative and challenging opportunities to expand not only our knowledge base, but also our horizons. The desire to learn new things, fine-tune skills and seek exciting adventures all contribute to intellectual wellness. See if you can inspire exploration and curiosity in yourself and your colleagues in the pursuit of lifelong learning by trying one—or all—of the activities below.

GIVE IT A GO!

- ▶ **Explore what motivates you.** Discover new hobbies, take a course on a new topic, learn a language or instrument, travel, solve a puzzle or sign-up for e-newsletters that deliver stimulating articles about whichever topic piques your interest.
- ▶ **Be open-minded.** To ensure you stay open to new ideas and insights, try starting your day with a mind, body and energy check-in. The mindfulness poster on The Sandbox provides simple steps—just visit the Resources section of TheWellnessSandbox.ca and search “mindfulness.” This exercise can be used in the classroom, at a staff meeting and more!
- ▶ **Try something new.** Challenge a group from work to visit a local attraction they’ve never been to this month. Search “Alberta Culture and Tourism” or “Travel Alberta” online to find two websites full of opportunities to be inspired by. As a group, you’ll gain and share knowledge about Alberta’s rich history.







Physical Wellness

Likely the most well-known dimension of wellness, physical wellness is about more than just eating a variety of whole foods and moving daily. For optimal health, the more subtle pieces of physical well-being—such as sleep hygiene, how we move and the detection of early signs of illness—also deserve attention. Broaden the approach to physical wellness within your workplace with the following ideas.

GIVE IT A GO!

- ▶ **Get a good sleep.** Start the conversation about the importance of sleep by posting a resource such as “Catch a Few More ZZZ’s” from The Sandbox’s Wellness Poster Series in your workplace. Getting a good night’s rest is the foundation for having the energy to incorporate more movement into the day and to prepare nourishing food, so visit the Resources section of TheWellnessSandbox.ca and download the poster today.
- ▶ **Keep up with check-ups.** There’s no better time than now to book an appointment with a health professional! Use the check-up to discuss recommendations for maintaining your physical health and helping to prevent illness. You can also encourage colleagues to be proactive about their health by visiting MyHealth.Alberta.ca to find a doctor, important health-related phone numbers and information about medications, tests, treatments and more.



Environmental Wellness

Environmental wellness addresses the natural and physical environments we work and play in, which have a dramatic effect on our daily lives. It dictates what's available nearby, like fresh food, walkable areas and services. Our connection to nature also has a direct impact on psychological health, as those with regular interactions report lower stress, improved short-term memory and increased mental energy. Why not give yourself and your colleagues a dose of environmental wellness with the ideas below?

GIVE IT A GO!

- ▶ **Grow outside, inside.** Bring nature into your home or workplace by introducing a potted plant or two! Not a plant person? Even looking at a painting or picture of nature each day has shown to produce a positive, stress-reducing effect, so try changing your computer's background image to a tranquil nature scene or post a picture of your garden—or dream garden—in your workspace.
- ▶ **Appreciate Alberta's beauty.** Make it a goal to get outside every day, whether that's for an evening walk with the dog or by hosting regular walking meetings at work. Visit TheWellnessSandbox.ca and search "walk on the wild side" to find a blog about walking meetings, full of great tips on how to get going, stay safe and, of course, ensure productivity. To find walking or hiking trails near you or your workplace, check out albertatrailnet.com.







PAY OFF
STUDENT LOANS

SAVE FOR A
DOWN PAYMENT

BUY A HOME

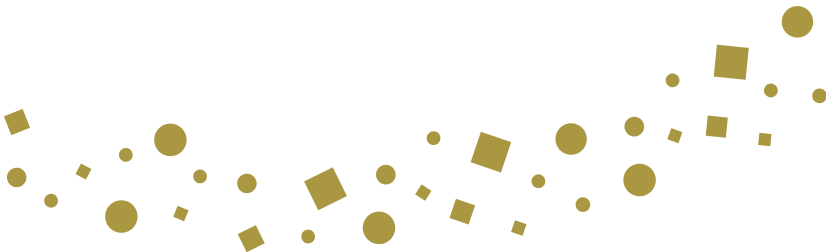


Financial Wellness

Stressful, confusing, overwhelming. At times, these words can describe financial wellness (or un-wellness)—the ability to not only meet financial obligations but also save for things you want to accomplish in life, like travelling, purchasing a home or planning for a comfortable retirement. Although money can't buy happiness, finances can impact other dimensions of wellness, including the emotional, physical and social elements. Focus on activities like the ones below to increase your workplace's awareness of the importance of financial wellness.

GIVE IT A GO!

- ▶ **Establish financial goals.** Everyone needs to start somewhere, so pave your road to financial well-being by creating financial goals. Chartered Professional Accountants Canada provides useful tips for setting goals, as well as information on other financial topics. Visit cpacanada.ca and search "money management worksheets."
- ▶ **Learn the lingo.** The world of personal finances isn't always a strong suit for many people, so consider making it a focus for your workplace during an upcoming month. Host a financial literacy week and fill it with activities or tips, such as sharing financial terms and their meanings. To get started, go to canada.ca and search "workplace financial literacy."



Occupational Wellness

Succeeding in a job is only one aspect of occupational wellness. Other aspects include feeling fulfilled and engaged at work, sharing knowledge with coworkers and enjoying meaningful duties and responsibilities. Occupational wellness is not just limited to the confines of a workplace—it can also include taking pride in describing your job or networking with others in a similar career. You and your colleagues can experience the joys of this dimension by trying the following suggestions below.

GIVE IT A GO!

- ▶ **Polish your skills.** Attending networking events, professional development days or mentorship programs can help you to develop knowledge, skills and interests within your work. Check out TheWellnessSandbox.ca and click on “Events” to find opportunities and conferences near you!
- ▶ **Set and strive toward goals.** Set realistic short and long-term occupational goals and make a plan to reach them—after all, having a sense of accomplishment helps to foster a positive attitude in the workplace. Take some time along the way to celebrate you and your colleagues’ milestones,

accomplishments and even learning opportunities from the things that didn’t quite work out.

- ▶ **Improve or maintain balance.** Open your day planner or smartphone calendar and schedule one thing each week that brings you personal happiness. Finding and maintaining a work/life balance is an important part of ensuring work satisfaction. Check out The Sandbox’s “I Don’t Want to Work” blog for some tips on how to balance occupational wellness with the other dimensions.







Social Wellness

Did you know that the ability to positively interact with others is directly related to social wellness? Well, it is! This means learning strong communication skills, interacting with the community and building a support network of family and friends all help to maintain social wellness. Take this opportunity to get together with your colleagues and foster everyone's social well-being with the activities below.

GIVE IT A GO!

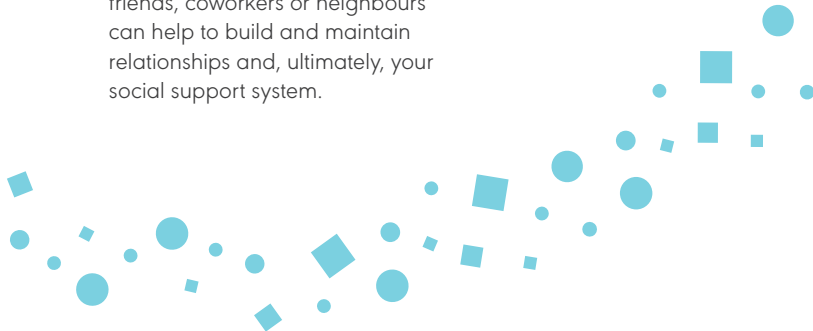
► **Contribute to your community.**

Evidence suggests that there are a number of health benefits associated with volunteering—from decreases in blood pressure to stress reduction—but it's important to seek opportunities that are meaningful to you. Search a list of events or organizations within your community and find out how you or your workplace can become involved!

► **Participate in group discussions.**

Engaging in conversation with family, friends, coworkers or neighbours can help to build and maintain relationships and, ultimately, your social support system.

► **Express gratitude.** Take five minutes at the beginning of your staff meetings to have each person express one thing they're grateful for in life. This gratitude contributes to a positive social environment, which is discussed in a Sandbox blog that also includes other useful resources. Visit TheWellnessSandbox.ca and search "shine bright" to find the blog.





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