

What is Wellness?

We often think of wellness as our physical and mental well-being. However, recent models have adopted a multidimensional definition of wellness, including: physical, emotional, financial, occupational, social, environmental, intellectual, and spiritual wellness. The Global Wellness Institute has defined wellness as “the active pursuit of activities, choices and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health” (Global Wellness Institute, 2021).

Why is it important?

Addressing all aspects of wellness will help you to live a fuller life and help you to navigate through challenging times, such as, dealing with chronic pain. At Barrow Neurological Institute, we aim to address your pain, and provide you with the tools to help you thrive in your everyday life. This means focusing on *all* aspects of your wellness. Let’s discuss some ways in which we can address wellness in every aspect of your life.

Types of Wellness



Physical wellness encompasses your body, how you fuel it and how you move it. When we optimize our physical body’s function, we are more equipped to deal with the stresses of everyday life. It is important to understand the

best way in which we can nourish, move and rest our body.

- Drink water - aim for 80 oz
- Eat a balanced diet (Make a consultation with a dietitian)
- Exercise 20-30 min a day doing something you love
- Set up good sleep habits
- Talk to your doctor when health concerns arise

Emotional wellness is defined by the National Institutes of Health as “the ability to successfully handle life’s stresses and adapt to change and difficult times” (NIH, 2021).

They strongly encourage a wellness toolkit that encourages brightening your outlook on life, stress reduction strategies, developing mindfulness, and strategies for coping with loss, as well as strengthening our social connections.

- Try keeping a gratitude journal
- Develop healthy cognitive behavior strategies that harness a positive mindset
- Implement tools for stress management

Financial wellness is defined as “the dynamic relationship of one’s financial and economic resources as they are applied to or impact the state of physical, mental and social well-being” (Frazier, 2022). Ways to improve your financial wellness are:

- Creating and sticking to a budget
- Pay off your credit card, or set small goals to become debt free
- Saving for an emergency fund
- Maximize your healthcare costs by understanding and knowing your benefits

Occupational wellness is more than just having a job, our occupational wellness helps us to find a profession that adds meaning and purpose to our lives. It is important for us to find a vocation that is fulfilling, where we develop good relations with co-workers, and that fosters growth both personally and professionally.

- Find what makes you feel alive, and go do that!
- Set and check in on your professional goals
- Get an ergonomic evaluation to check your work posture
- Honor your work-life balance - take your vacation!
- Develop deeper connections with your co-workers

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Social wellness has become all that more important during a global pandemic. We thrive on our connections with others. According to the National Institutes of Health, “positive social habits can help you build support systems and stay healthier mentally and physically” (NIH, 2021).

- Try volunteering, joining groups such as choir, theater, gardening, or even support groups
- Find a workout buddy, or try exercising with the family

Environmental wellness “is a process that involves learning about and contributing to the health of the planet” (Western University, 2022). This process enhances our respect for our surroundings and each other. We cannot always choose our environment, but we can always try to optimize our surroundings to the best of our capability. This could provide a greater sense of comfort and reduce overall anxiety.

- Living Green: Conserving water, recycling, reducing waste
- Eating Green: eating local foods, using reusable shopping bags
- Working Green: Go paperless, volunteering at an environmental organization

Intellectual wellness is about developing your mind by harnessing creative activities. Try:

- Engaging in thought provoking literature and debates
- Picking up new skills such as a hobby or language
- Play around with cognitive puzzles

Spiritual wellness revolves around our connection to something greater than ourselves, and helps us deepen our values and morals, and live a life with more meaning and purpose. We can expand our spiritual wellness through prayer or meditation, or even just by adopting a positive outlook on life.

Putting it into Action!

You do not need to do all of this at once. Bite sized pieces are the best! Start by selecting one area of wellness to focus on, and develop a goal that is specific, attainable, and realistic. Periodically, take time to check in on your progress and reflect on the positive changes this has had on your overall wellness.

References:

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