

Wellness Promotion, Mindfulness, and Substance Use Prevention

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Prevention

- Increase in prevention and early intervention programs that help young people refrain from substance use and develop healthy lifestyles
- According to national datasets, the prevalence of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use increases rapidly from early to late adolescence, peaks during the transition to young adulthood, and declines through the remainder of adulthood. Furthermore, there is accumulating evidence showing that the initiation of substance use early in life contributes to higher levels of use and abuse later in life
- There is strong evidence of the role of good sleep, nutritious diet, exercise, social connectedness, enhanced self-esteem, sense of purpose in life, resilience, mindfulness, in the promotion of mental well-being and prevention

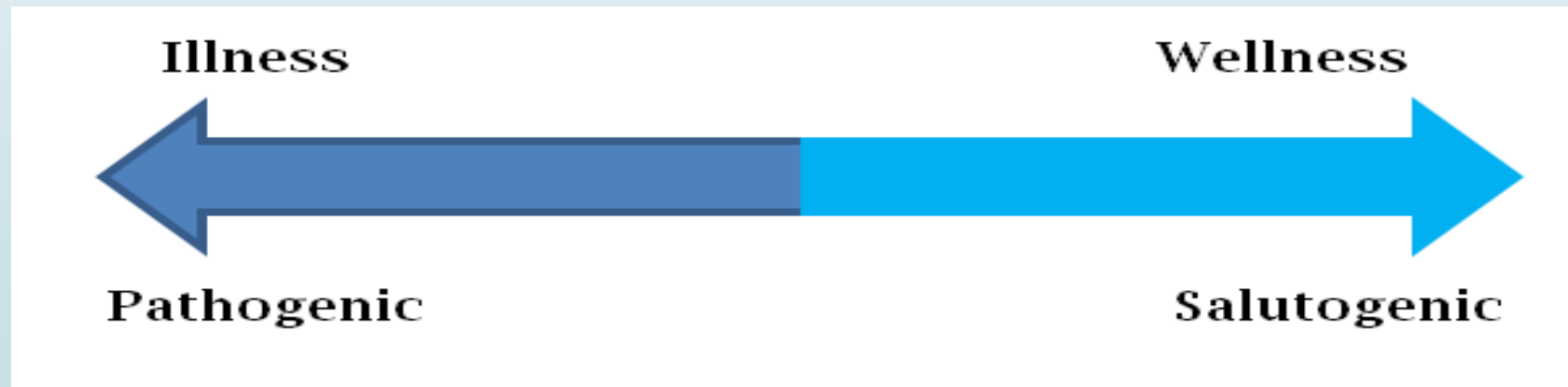


Prevention

- ▶ A holistic approach to substance abuse treatment strives for more than the absence of substance use and disease. It focuses on emotional, physical, and social well being by helping the individual move along a continuum from a reactive, chaotic existence to a proactive, productive lifestyle.
- ▶ There is an urgent need in the substance abuse field for integrated treatment models that deal more effectively with individuals' etiological, biological, psychological, social, spiritual, and cultural considerations.

A Wellness Approach to Prevention

Evidence supporting the link between wellness and lifestyle behaviors has contributed to a paradigm shift toward a holistic and salutogenic understanding of health and wellness





What is “wellness”?



Wellness

Wellness is “a way of life oriented toward optimal health and well-being, in which mind, body, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live life more fully within the human and natural community”



Wellness

- ▶ Healthy lifestyle and wellness-related activities (e.g. exercise, healthy eating habits, stress reduction techniques, social supports), are associated with lower levels of mental illness and substance use among adolescents
- ▶ Healthy lifestyle and wellness-related activities were also associated with higher levels of resilience, which can help individuals cope with stress and adversity



Wellness

- ▶ Social support, including emotional support and positive communication, was found to be a significant protective factor among adolescents
- ▶ Optimism, self-efficacy, and gratitude, have also been found to be protective factors

Prevention



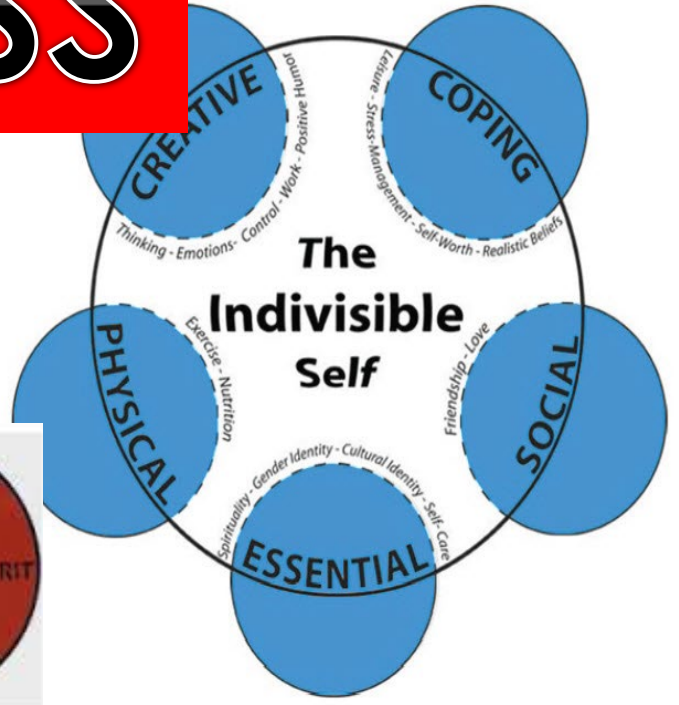
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Wellness

- Subjective
- Personal
- Multi-dimensional



WELLNESS



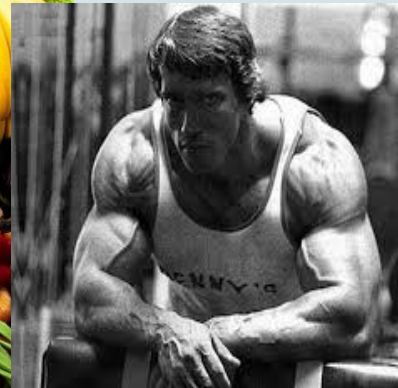
Multi-Dimensional Wellness: A Common Factors Approach



Physical Wellness

Maintaining bodily balance and harmony through cardiovascular fitness, flexibility, strength, and healthy diet taking preventative action to minimize illness, and avoiding detrimental or unhealthy behaviors

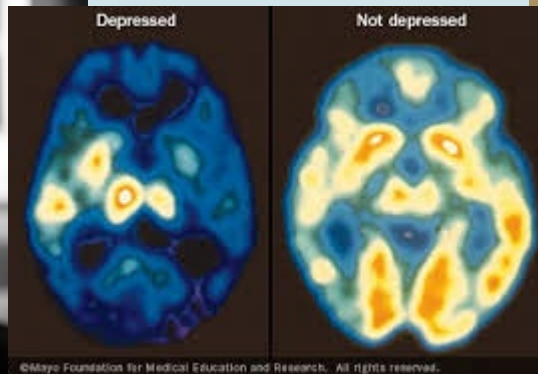
- ▶ Physical activity interventions can acutely downregulate craving and withdrawal-related negative mood
- ▶ Physical activity can induce pleasurable states by changes in neurotransmission, which can be experienced as an internal reward stimulus
- ▶ Substance use can be conceptualized as a maladaptive coping strategy to handle stressful, unpleasant, and difficult situations. In this regard, physical activity has been proposed to broaden the repertoire of possible behaviors and to provide alternative coping strategies for emotion regulation



Emotional Wellness

Emotional wellness can be conceptualized as one's ability to manage and express emotions in a healthy manner. Aspects commonly associated with emotional wellness include self-awareness, self-concept, and the acceptance of a wide range of feelings.

- Individuals who are emotionally well are both autonomous and flexible, able to constructively process emotions.
- Promoting emotion regulation can improve anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) brain activity and help with addiction prevention and treatment
- Gains from improved emotional regulation provide buffers for adolescents from stress and thereby mediate substance use
- Emotion regulation skills can include distress tolerance and coping skills.



Intellectual Wellness

Intellectual wellness relates to the attainment and application of optimal levels of intellectual stimulation. Emphasized in this domain is personal growth, and the understanding that intellectual stimulating activities are unique to each individual. Key concepts included in intellectual wellness are creativity, education, achievement, and critical reasoning

- ▶ Substance use has been linked to long-term alterations in brain structures and pathways considered critical for reward processing, judgment and decision making, learning and memory, and cognitive control
- ▶ Cognitive-behavioral approaches to substance use have emphasized functional analysis of cues for drug use and the systematic training of alternative responses to these cues.
- ▶ Includes psychoeducation, cognitive reappraisal, skills training, and other behavioral strategies



Social Wellness

Social wellness relates to both “the quality and extent of interaction with others” Based on the understanding that social relationships can have a profound impact on our health and well-being, including mental health and the ability to cope with stress. Social wellness has to do with a sense of connectedness and the interdependence with others including both the amount of support received and reciprocated

- Reviews of substance abuse prevention emphasized the necessity of having strong connections between children and significant others (including peers, teachers, community members) as a way of preventing drug use
- One of the most consistent findings in research on the etiology of adolescent substance use is that social influences are central, powerful factors that promote experimentation or initiation of use.



Spiritual Wellness

Spiritual wellness is focused on finding a sense of meaning and purpose in life. May include an emphasis on inner and relational harmony with others as well as an understanding of one's place in the universe or in relation to a higher power

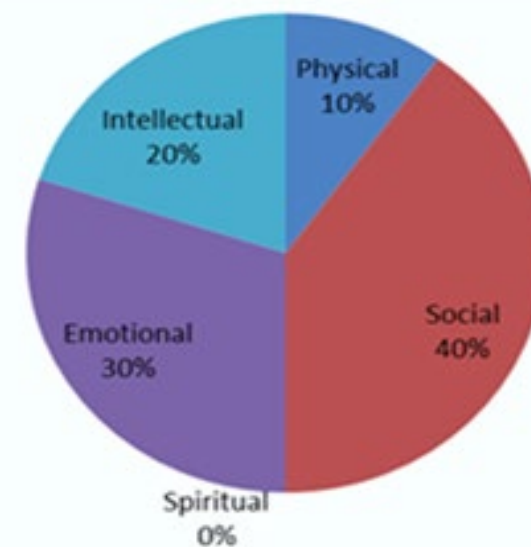
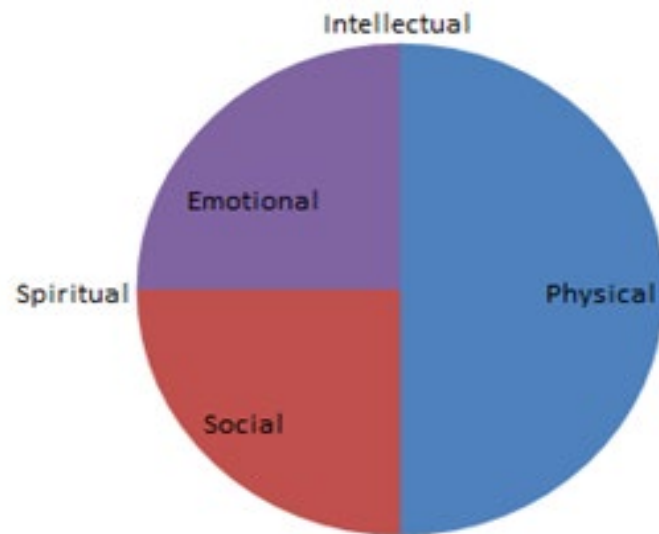
- Central to spiritual wellness is a pursuit of a fulfilling life, and the development of personal values and beliefs
- More than 84% of scientific studies show that spirituality is a positive factor in addiction prevention or recovery



Multi-Dimensional Wellness: A Common Factors Approach



Client-Driven Domains of Wellness





**So how do we work with clients
to improve wellness?**

**How does our communication
affect our work with clients?**



SFBT Mindset Components

- Future-focused
- Strengths-oriented
- Client as expert

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Tools of SFBT (Blundo & Simon, 2015)

- Scaling questions
- Genuine compliments
- Miracle question
- Finding exceptions
- Goal setting

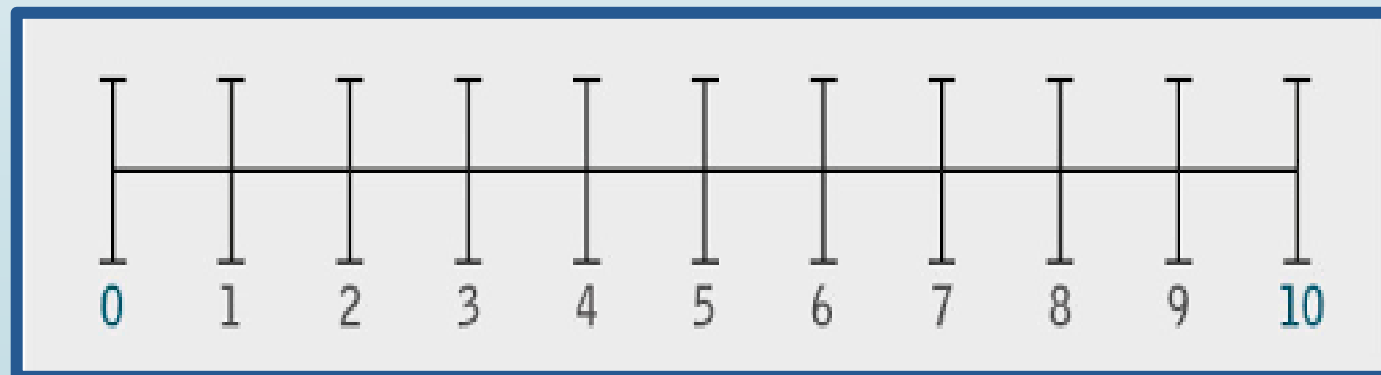
Miracle Question

- ▶ Invites clients to visualize and describe their future if the problem was miraculously resolved
- ▶ Gently nudges toward solutions
- ▶ Keeps a hopeful eye toward the future
- ▶ Helps shift conversations from problems to solutions



Scaling Questions

- ▶ Helps client gauge how they are currently coping and how they would like to see their future
- ▶ Can be used to set and track realistic goals
- ▶ Helps client see their short-term progress



Genuine Compliments

- Direct compliment offered to clients in order to comment about observed strengths, progress
- Helps keep the focus positive and encouraging
- Helps with the “do more of what is working” rule



Finding exceptions

- ▶ Identifies ways that clients have already dealt with the problem and by asking them to think of times when the problem may be less severe or not present at all
- ▶ Explore exceptions to the problem
- ▶ Shows respect and acknowledgement of past efforts and successes





Goal setting

- The practitioner helps the client set goals that are realistic, achievable and positive
- Keeps session focused on the future
- Helps with tracking progress
- Keeps the work brief and successful

Solution-Focused Coaching

- ▶ Coaching is a facilitative approach intended to assist individuals achieve personal and/or professional goals
- ▶ Coaching **is not** a therapeutic approach for use with individuals wishing to resolve clinical goals or pathological conditions such as depression (Grant, 2001)
- ▶ If a coaching client presents with goals of a clinical nature, refer as appropriate





Application: Solution-Focused Wellness in action

Solution-Focused Wellness Coaching: Multi-Dimensional Wellness Model



Physical Wellness

Current rating (1-10) ____ Desired rating (4 weeks) ____ Desired rating (8 weeks)

Questions to consider:

How will you know when you are at a 6? Or 8?

What will be different about your life?

What would your optimal physical self look like?


Activities you are currently doing or could do in the future to improve Physical Wellness:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Short-term goals:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

The purpose of developing wellness goals is self-care, not to set goals that are unattainable or too challenging. Emphasis should be on accentuating positive effort and progress, in order to develop positive self-efficacy, confidence, and overall wellness.



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Intellectual Wellness							
Physical Wellness							
Social Wellness							
Emotional Wellness							
Spiritual Wellness							

Weekly Wellness Activity Log



SF Wellness Coaching

- ▶ Applicable in both individual and group contexts
- ▶ Has been shown to be effective in reducing stress and improving perceptions of wellness in 6-week group format
- ▶ Lasting results – 6 week follow up
- ▶ Focus is on prevention, establishing healthy lifestyle trends and “buffers”



Wellness Outcomes

- ▶ Improved well-being (WHO-5)
- ▶ Decreased Stress (PSS)
- ▶ Mental Health (PHQ9)
- ▶ Perceived Wellness (PWS)
- ▶ Resiliency (BRS)

Both in-person and via telehealth



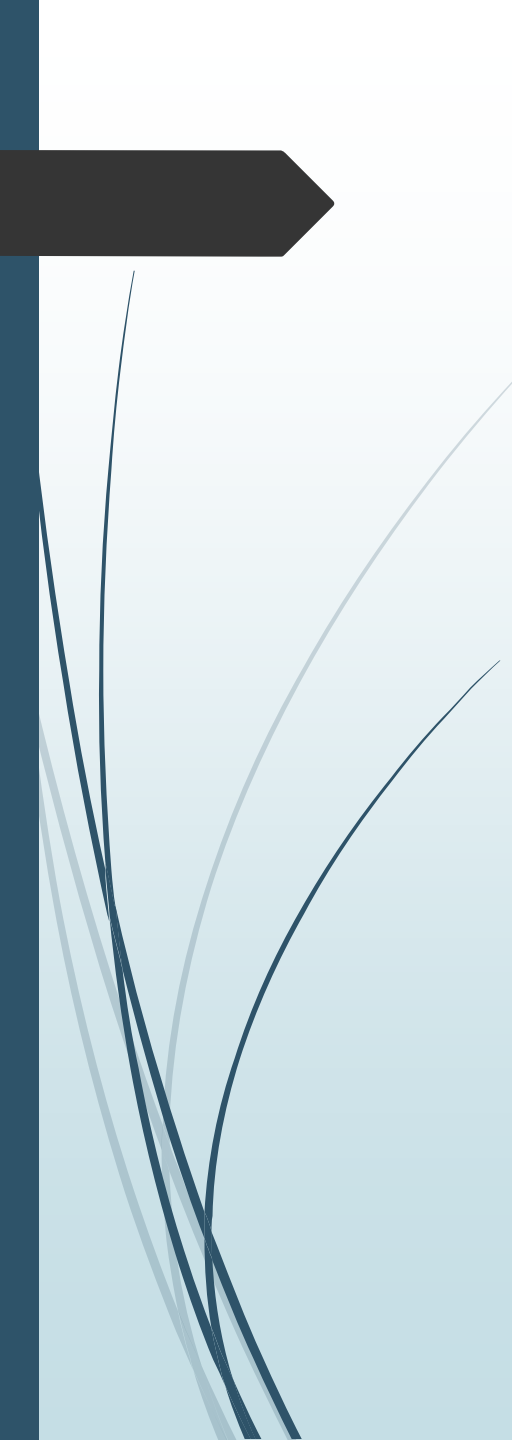
Holistic Approach to Prevention

A holistic perspective attends to more than just the absence of substance use or disease commonly ingrained in more traditional models of treatment. It encourages *growth through self-exploration and appropriate expression of feelings, recognition of difficult emotional states, and learning more adaptive ways to soothe and comfort the mind, body, and spirit.*



Mindfulness

A state of metacognitive awareness characterized by an attentive and nonjudgmental monitoring of moment-by-moment cognition, emotion, sensation, and perception without perseveration on thoughts of past and future.

- 
- I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until some time later.
 - I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.
 - I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.
 - I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention.
 - I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time.
 - It seems I am "running on automatic," without much awareness of what I'm doing.
 - I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I'm doing right now to get there
 - I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time.
 - I drive places on 'automatic pilot' and then wonder why I went there.
 - I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past. I snack without being aware that I'm eating.



Mindlessness

In contrast to trait mindfulness, which is associated with cognitive and behavioral flexibility, addiction may be characterized by mindlessness i.e., habitual or stereotyped responses that may be executed automatically without conscious volition or strategic regard for distal consequences (e.g. craving – reward behavior cycle)



State vs Trait Mindfulness

- ▶ State = short-term characteristic that is dependent upon circumstances, influences present experiences
- ▶ Frequent and regular practice (e.g., daily) of mindfulness techniques is thought to cultivate durable changes in the trait-like propensity to be mindful in everyday life even when one is not engaged in meditation practice
- ▶ Dispositional or trait mindfulness is characterized by the capacity to remain nonreactive to and accepting of distressing thoughts and emotions; observe interoceptive and exteroceptive experience; discriminate emotional states; and be aware of automaticity



Wellness Benefits of Mindfulness

Cognitive: development of focused, sustained attention abilities, disengagement from perseverative cognitive activities, enhance working memory capacity and some executive functions

Emotional: improving positive affect, helps develop effective emotion regulation

Physical: enhance general features of coping with distress and disability in everyday life, physical well-being, such as medical symptoms, sensory pain, physical impairment, and functional quality-of-life estimates

Spiritual: benefits in the meaning/peace aspect of spiritual well-being, contribution to spiritual life in adolescence, and increase in daily spiritual experiences

Social: decreased social anxiety, improved social skills, interpersonal communication, higher-quality social functioning



Mindfulness Research: Substance Use

- MBIs are significantly inversely associated with substance use and craving and positively associated with the ability to disengage attention and recover autonomic function following exposure to addiction-related cues
- MBIs can be conceptualized as means of mental training designed to exercise a number of neurocognitive processes that become dysregulated during the process of substance use.
- Such mental training is provided by focused attention and open monitoring mindfulness practices which exercise processes crucial to the self-regulation of addictive behavior such as attentional re-orienting, metacognition, reappraisal, and inhibitory control

Mindfulness-Based Interventions

- ▶ Chocolate exercise
- ▶ Participants are guided to adopt a metacognitive stance toward their experience and deconstruct the craving into its constituent sensory, affective, and cognitive components, noticing how the craving subsides over time.
- ▶ Through this technique, clients learn to consciously respond to the urge to use substances rather than automatically reacting to appetitive cues in maladaptive ways.



Practice

Individuals who initially experience mindfulness meditation as rewarding (i.e., alleviating psychological distress and generating positive sensations and emotions) may be most likely to continue to practice mindfulness skills. In contrast, patients who experience an exacerbation of aversive thoughts and feelings during meditation are most likely to drop out from an MBI.



I just don't have time.....

- ▶ Brushing your teeth
- ▶ Washing dishes
- ▶ Driving
- ▶ Showering
- ▶ Walking to class
- ▶ 5 senses check in
- ▶ Eating
- ▶ 10 minutes/ day





Prevention

- A proactive, holistic approach can be an accessible, effective means of improving well-being, developing lifestyle “buffers”, and prevention of substance use challenges
- Can be operationalized in numerous ways that empower individuals to facilitate self-directed, meaningful change
- MBIs provide framework for increased awareness, emotion regulation, and a host of wellness-related benefits that can be integrated into trait lifestyle changes



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