



CREATING A **HEALTHIER LIFE**

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO WELLNESS






CREATING A HEALTHIER LIFE: *A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO WELLNESS*

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Wellness Initiative envisions a future in which people with mental or substance use problems pursue health, happiness, recovery, and a full and satisfying life in the community.

Each individual's path will be a bit different.

Every aspect of wellness can affect a person's life. Working toward all of them in one way or another is a great goal, because wellness relates directly to the quality of a person's life.

This guide offers a broad approach for things we can do—at our own pace, in our own time, and within our own abilities—that can help us feel better and live longer.

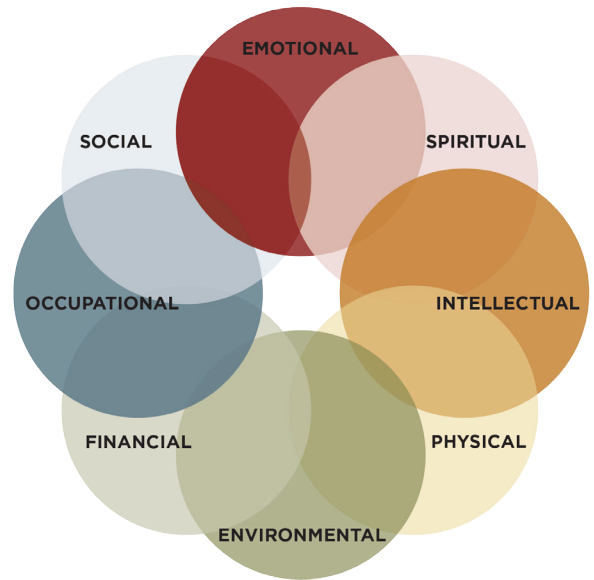




WHAT IS WELLNESS?

Wellness is a broad concept. In this guide, we attempt to provide a broad, yet specific sense of what it means. We invite you to think of wellness as meaning being healthy in many dimensions of our lives. That includes the emotional, physical, occupational, intellectual, financial, social, environmental, and spiritual parts. These dimensions are interconnected, one dimension building on another.

We also recognize that we live in a multicultural world, and wellness encompasses areas that may not be specified in this brief discussion. We believe, for example, that trauma is a universal human experience, and that our culture and spiritual beliefs impact our perceptions and everything we do. In summary, wellness is about how we live our lives and the joy and fulfillment and health we experience.



EIGHT DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS*

When we worry about money (for example, debt or being able to afford what we need), we sometimes experience anxiety (emotional). This can lead to medical problems (physical), and trouble at work (occupational). When this happens, we may even question our own sense of meaning and purpose (spiritual).

At the same time, when we are not working (occupational), we may lose opportunities to interact with others (social), and may not be able to afford the good food and medical care we need to stay well (physical). We may even need to move our home to a place that feels less safe and secure (environmental).

*Source: Adapted from Swarbrick, M. (2006). A Wellness Approach. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 29(4), 311-314.



CREATING BALANCE

Creating balance in our lives is an important part of wellness. Overall, a balanced life can mean many things, depending on culture, circumstances, resources, and other factors. Balance means making sure we have time to do the things that make us feel happy and fulfilled. This includes working (paid or unpaid), having fun, spending time with family and friends, participating in the community, being physically active—including sexually—praying, and relaxing and sleeping.

Because we each have individual needs, preferences, and capabilities, what we consider “balance” will also look different. And it’s important for us to re-balance from time to time, to adjust to what is going on in our lives.

When we’re trying to get through a tough time—whether it is stress, an illness, trauma, or an emotional challenge—balance is especially important. In these times, our habits and routines can help us get that feeling of control back. This means focusing on ourselves as well as the roles we play in the lives of others—like being students, friends, parents, spouses, coworkers, congregants, hobbyists, community members, and citizens.

Our roles and relationships help define who we are, what gives us a sense of purpose, and how our lives are interdependent on other people, animals, and the environment.

Being engaged in life and relationships provides a measure of balance and overall wellness. For example, swimming has physical benefits (building strength, improving circulation), as well as social (meeting other people) and emotional benefits (relieving stress). But we don’t have to swim laps every week to be well; getting into the pool even occasionally is a great step.

Having a safe and clean living environment helps us feel organized and in control. It can be a way to get physical activity in as well, and offers the chance for partners and families to work together.

On the flip side, simply finding time to relax can go a long way toward finding balance in our lives. “Down time” can provide the space we need to think through a situation or work through our feelings, or just let us rest.



EMBRACING SUPPORT FROM OTHERS

Most of us know something that we do that makes us feel good about ourselves, or in balance. It could be as different as taking our dog for a walk, or balancing our checkbook. And any step in that direction, such as finding a new walking route or gathering receipts from a purse, is positive.

However, sometimes we may want advice from family and friends. That's OK, too, and is where support from others comes in.

Talking with someone who has been through similar things—whether it is a mental health issue, addiction, trauma, pain issues, smoking, diabetes, bullying, or abuse—makes us feel less alone. When we realize others have had similar feelings and experiences and have been able to move forward and grow, it can give us the confidence to move forward, too.

With a support group, we can expect:

- Supportive input from people with a range of backgrounds who have experiences similar to ours;
- A chance to support others by our presence, compassion, our ideas, and empathy; and
- People who can suggest services or resources we might not have considered.

We can find supportive people in many places—a community or church/synagogue/mosque/temple group, at work, or through volunteering efforts, to name a few.

VALUING ROUTINES AND HABITS

Having self-defined routines and habits can offer personal balance and satisfaction.

Routine and habit is generally determined by our basic needs (nutrition/food, shelter, social affiliation, safety, etc.), and the various roles we occupy in society. Our habits affect what we eat, what we wear, how we relate to others, how we go to work, how we spend or save money, and more.

Habits become ingrained in us—and are often tough to change. For example, we might put ourselves down or feel we need a particular thing or person to get us through a tough spot. We can learn otherwise.

Life demands, stress, crisis, or trauma can impact or alter our routines and habits. This can lead to emotional (anxiety, depression), social (cranky, isolated, angry), or physical (tired, agitated) imbalances.

Establishing new, better habits that support our wellness goals and values can be challenging, but worth it. Developing healthier routines and habits in our lives can lead to positive feelings (emotional), relationship satisfaction (social), increased energy (physical), inspiration (emotional), and a feeling that we are using our creative talents, skills, and abilities to engage in activities (occupational, intellectual, spiritual).



We may already have regular practices that make us feel better, such as mindfulness exercises, meditation or yoga, or calls to friends. It could even be avoiding the news at night, or spending less time online. You, as the expert on yourself, will know what works and what doesn't in all the dimensions. When you are not sure, you can ask someone and think together about what makes sense and what next steps might work best.

We can also consider:

- Being active in activities that have purpose. If our daily routine lacks meaning, we can feel distressed or powerless.
- Increasing activities that contribute to our wellness. Talking with a friend at the start of the day may help set a good intention or plan for the day.
- Getting a good night's rest. Insomnia can noticeably impact social relationships, physical and emotional reactions, productivity, and our ability to concentrate and accomplish tasks.
- Being aware of the right amount of social interaction. It's important to know our limits.
- Remembering that time zone changes or daylight saving time can impact our mood and our routines; readjusting is normal.
- Using a routine that works for us. Calendars help us remember when or how often we want to get things done, such as get an oil change, clean the refrigerator, celebrate an accomplishment, call a friend or family member, check our financial records, and schedule an annual physical.
- Repeating a behavior until it becomes automatic, such as taking medication. Checklists help us make sure that important tasks are not being forgotten.
- Creating a wellness lifestyle can be challenging, but finding the right information, supports, and resources and tracking our progress can help us get there.



IMPROVING OUR PHYSICAL WELLNESS

A healthy body. Good physical health habits. Nutrition, exercise, and appropriate health care. These make up the physical dimension of wellness. A few ways we can get there might be choosing things that make our body feel good and trimming back the things that bring us down. We can also feel better by creating a routine that balances activity with inactivity, and that is manageable within our obligations and needs. Our body is intelligent, and learning to listen to it more deeply may be very important and empowering.

AREA	THINK ABOUT...	RESOURCES
Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have access to fresh, healthy food? • Are you in a position to eat at home so you can better track what you are putting into your body? • Are you improving your diet by setting small goals for small changes each day, week, or month? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check out local food co-ops if one is in your area for good, affordable food. • Visit USDA's Choose My Plate (http://www.choosemyplate.gov) or Food Pyramid.com (http://www.foodpyramid.com). • Meet with dietitians and nutritionists if you need help, or try programs like Weight Watchers. • Explore self-help support groups and organizations, like TOPS or Overeaters Anonymous.
Physical Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you getting regular physical activity whenever you can, and making it fun? • Have you been taking "shortcuts" to exercise, like parking further away from the store and taking the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator? • Have you identified your healthy Body Mass Index and begun working toward it, one day at a time? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join and visit local gyms, YMCAs, and fitness clubs, or join a neighborhood pool. • Look through fitness and other magazines for exercises you can do at home. • Check out free resources, such as YouTube, to learn how to do yoga or other exercises. • Search for tracking tools like http://www.myfitnesspal.com that will show how far you've come.
Sleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you getting 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night whenever possible? • Are you avoiding exercise within a few hours of bedtime, as well as "screen time"? • Are you avoiding large meals before going to bed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try managing your routine to carve out time to rest and sleep, and cut back on caffeine. • Explore the tips found on Healthy People. gov (http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=38), Mayo Clinic (http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/sleep/HQ01387), and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (http://www.cdc.gov/sleep).
Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you tried tools that can help you cut down or quit using tobacco products, alcohol, or other drugs? • Are you reaching out to family or friends instead of using substances when you are going through a tough time? • Are you being mindful of triggers that make you want to use substances and do you have a plan that can help you avoid them? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find support groups and 12-step groups, like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA), in your community and attend meetings. • Consider engaging in hypnosis, acupuncture, or nicotine replacement therapy to curb the smoking habit (http://health.howstuffworks.com/wellness/smokingcessation/tools-to-help-successfully-quit-smoking.htm).
Medication Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you wear medical alert jewelry to help others help you? • Are you storing medications properly and reviewing the expiration dates? • Do you carry a list of your medications with you in case of emergency? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your doctor, using a process of shared decision-making when you are unsure about a prescription or need guidance. (http://media.samhsa.gov/consumersurvivor/sdm/StartHere.html) • Learn more about potential side effects from Consumer Med Safety.org (http://www.consumermedsafety.org) and Consumer Reports (http://www.consumerreports.org).
Preventive Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you visit your doctor, dentist, or other health care provider for routine care and monitoring? • Do you know how to check your blood pressure, waist circumference, and blood sugar to prevent chronic conditions like diabetes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss preventive health care with your doctor, dentist, or other health care provider. • Visit your local public health center and use HRSA Find A HelpCenter (http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/) to find the closest location to you. • Consider seeing a holistic health provider or attending community health fairs.

WAYS TO IMPROVE MY
PHYSICAL WELLNESS



WHAT I WILL DO	WHAT I NEED



IMPROVING OUR INTELLECTUAL WELLNESS

The Intellectual Wellness Dimension involves many things that keep our brains active and our intellect expanding. In a broad sense, this dimension can involve looking at different perspectives of an issue and taking them into consideration. Through a number of activities—from learning about current events to organizing game nights in your home or community center—you can broaden your perspective and understand diverse points of view.

AREA	THINK ABOUT...	RESOURCES
Personal Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you considered teaching a class or leading a workshop based on skills, knowledge, or experience you have? • Do you enjoy reading? Might you be interested in books, magazines, blogs, Facebook, etc.? • What would you like to do or learn? Have you considered creative arts such as drawing, pottery, or photography? How about martial arts or learning about nature or about improving your computer skills? • Have you considered inviting a friend, family member, or coworker to attend a lecture, musical performance, or play? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a community group or organization where you could teach a class or a workshop, or lead a discussion. • Consider becoming a member at the local public library to gain access to books, book readings, and other events. • Explore public events in your community by checking out the events section in the newspaper. • Flip through travel books or go online to find places you might enjoy reading about or visiting. • Sign up for a computer class.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are interested in continuing education, are there available classes near you that might lead you to getting a volunteer or paid job or to performing better at a job? • Are you interested in improving your language skills or learning a new language, whether one-on-one, through a group class, or via CDs or online resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check out local college websites for information on classes they offer to the public. • See what kind of skills training—such as writing, sign language, or blogging— might be available at the public library, local congregations, local colleges, or other community organizations.
Brain Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you explored thrift shops, libraries, or bookstores for books or DVDs that interest you? • Are you keeping your mind sharp by playing brain games, mind teasers, or fun memory-enhancing games? • Have you read up on current affairs locally, nationally, and internationally lately? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subscribe to your local newspaper or pick up a free edition. Many offer sections on subjects that are local, national, and international. • Play crossword puzzles and other games like Sudoku. • Become familiar with websites like Games for the Brain (http://www.gamesforthebrain.com/).
Conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you enjoy taking part in discussions, intellectual conversations, debates, or other ways of gaining an enhanced understanding of issues? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Befriend people who can stimulate your mind, and get into a discussion with them about topics that interest you.



WAYS TO IMPROVE MY
INTELLECTUAL WELLNESS

WHAT I WILL DO	WHAT I NEED



IMPROVING OUR FINANCIAL WELLNESS

There are many definitions of what constitutes being financially well, but overall, the Financial Wellness Dimension involves things such as income, debt, and savings, as well as a person’s understanding of financial processes and resources. A person’s satisfaction with their current financial situation and future prospects also comes into play.

AREA	THINK ABOUT...	RESOURCES
Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the domain of financial wellness impact your life? How it is related to your wellness? • Does your current job allow you to meet your obligations and have resources to do things you enjoy? • Are you working in a field that you are passionate about or do well? Or are you looking at doing something differently, perhaps more personally gratifying? • Are you looking for paid or volunteer work? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check out the classified ads— particularly on Sunday. Search them online any day of the week. • Explore sites like Careerbuilder.com or Monster.com, and consider establishing a profile on LinkedIn. • Visit the unemployment office in your state or county to find classes that could train you for a job. • Have your résumé updated so you can promptly submit it when you see an opportunity. • If you receive disability benefits, explore your work options without losing SSI/SSDI benefits until you can support yourself. For a guide to working without affecting your benefits, go to: http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10069.pdf
Checking/ Savings Accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you balance your checkbook often enough, ensuring that you don’t overextend yourself? • Are your savings in line with your life goals, such as taking a vacation, home ownership, or retirement? • Do you have a weekly or monthly budget so you can plan for expenses such as rent and groceries and have a little left over to enjoy? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the bank about the types of accounts available— such as checking and savings accounts—so you are using them to your advantage and gaining interest where available. • Find out if the bank offers tools you can use to keep track of your money. • If you’re receiving disability benefits, there’s a limit on how much you can save without affecting your benefits. Read more about allowable savings at: http://www.ehow.com/info_8247348_can-receive-ssi-social-security.html
Debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would it be helpful to figure out your total debt and make a plan to pay it down in a manageable way? • Have you thought about getting help from a person who specializes in money management or personal finances? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look in your classifieds or search online for organizations that can help you pay down debt. • Make sure you use a company that is credible. • Consider asking your bank to help you with financial planning and other areas where you may want assistance.
Retirement/ Other Accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you opened a savings account or another kind of account that works for you? • However, if you’re receiving disability benefits, there’s a limit on how much you can save without affecting your benefits. SSI requires that your resources are under \$2,000 for an individual or \$3,000 for a couple. This includes bank accounts, cash, stocks, bonds. However, your home, household furnishings, car, burial plots, and insurance under \$1,500 are not included. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are free or low-cost services that can help you plan for the future. The local library can often direct you to affordable financial planning resources. • If you are receiving disability benefits, read more about allowable savings at: http://www.ehow.com/info_8247348_can-receive-ssi-social-security.html • The Social Security Administration (SSA) has a toll-free number that can answer your questions Monday through Friday: 1-800-772-1213



WAYS TO IMPROVE MY
FINANCIAL WELLNESS

WHAT I WILL DO	WHAT I NEED



IMPROVING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS

The Environmental Wellness Dimension involves being able to be safe and feel safe. This can include:

- Accessing clean air, food, and water;
- Preserving the areas where we live, learn, and work;
- Occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support our well-being; and
- Promoting learning, contemplation, and relaxation in natural places and spaces.

AREA	THINK ABOUT...	RESOURCES
Green Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you recycling whenever possible, and buying recycled products? • Do you limit the power and water you use at home? • Are you taking public transportation? • Do you check your car's emissions every year, even if not required by law? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get recycling bins for your home—they may be free from your town. • Look for cleanup volunteer efforts, such as collecting trash from roadways or parks. • Explore the “green” aisles at home improvement stores; they often have energy-efficient light bulbs and other products
Change of Scenery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you spending as much time outdoors as possible? • Have you visited a public park to either play a sport like tennis or basketball or just take a walk? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figure out what outdoor activities make you feel good, and then find a few options that make it easy to do that. • During work hours, take a break to walk around the block or buy bottled water from a nearby store.
Home and Work Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you going through mail and other paperwork frequently to get rid of clutter? • Do you organize your work space from time to time and add things that make you happy? • Is your living space filled with styles and textures you enjoy? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a schedule to clean up your home or living space. It could be by room or activity (bathrooms on Sunday, dusting and sweeping every Wednesday, etc.). • Look in magazines or online and find styles you like best so that you're comfortable in your living space

WAYS TO IMPROVE MY
ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS



WHAT I WILL DO	WHAT I NEED



IMPROVING OUR SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

The Spiritual Wellness Dimension is a broad concept that represents one’s personal beliefs and values and involves having meaning, purpose, and a sense of balance and peace. It includes:

- Recognizing our search for meaning and purpose in human existence; and
- Developing an appreciation for life and the natural forces that exist in the universe.

AREA	THINK ABOUT...	RESOURCES
Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you taking the time to determine what values, principles, and beliefs are important to you? Have you considered talking about them with others? • Have you learned about other religions and beliefs, and are you respectful of them? • Are you using your spirituality to drive your actions and thoughts and give a better meaning to life? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read about other types of beliefs to help you become more understanding, accepting, and open-minded. • Keep your beliefs in your thoughts to use them in your everyday life. • Share your beliefs, values, and principles with others, as appropriate, as a means of deepening relationships and expanding your world view.
Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you looked for a group in your community that deepens your spiritual practice and helps you connect with others who share your beliefs? • Are you being social with the people in your organization? • Do you reach out and help others when they are in need? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about different organizations or groups in your community and decide which ones are the best fit for you. • Find out about the many groups offered within your organization and get involved.
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you take the time each day to meditate or reflect on your spirituality? • Are you open to exploring different belief systems? • Are you receptive to your own spirituality even in times of pain and grief? This is when we find how our spirituality can help us most. • Do you take the time to appreciate the beauty of nature when possible? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As often as possible, find a peaceful location to reflect and meditate. • Learn other religions through books or conversation.

WAYS TO IMPROVE MY
SPIRITUAL WELLNESS



WHAT I WILL DO	WHAT I NEED



IMPROVING OUR SOCIAL WELLNESS

The Social Wellness Dimension involves having healthy relationships with friends, family, and the community, and having an interest in and concern for the needs of others and humankind.

AREA	THINK ABOUT...	RESOURCES
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you found support groups in your area to connect on important issues? • Have you made a date with friends for a movie, dinner, coffee, or other social activities? • Are you keeping in touch with family or friends? You can pick up the phone and catch up if they are too far away—even a phone call can lift your spirits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask your doctor, a friend or family member, someone from your congregation, or others in your community about support groups. • Look online or in the local paper for groups that share your interests—whether it's knitting or playing softball. • Pick up the phone and connect with others.
New People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you getting out and meeting people with your same interests? If you like art, try a gallery; if you enjoy history, visit historic sites. • Are you open to meeting people from different backgrounds? • Have you found a place to volunteer? You never know who you might meet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look in the newspaper to find out what is happening in your area that could be an opportunity to make friends. • Keep an open mind and exercise your curious inquiry when meeting new people. • Ask in your spiritual community or any other community about volunteer opportunities. • Join meet-up groups online.
Social Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you set aside quality time to spend with family and friends? • Are you making time to go to places where you can meet new people, or visiting a new location? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep track of when you need to catch up with someone or when a friend or family member is due for a visit. • Organize a calendar of events that would be good ways to connect, or reconnect, to friends, like a public concert or a class reunion.

WAYS TO IMPROVE MY
SOCIAL WELLNESS



WHAT I WILL DO	WHAT I NEED



IMPROVING OUR OCCUPATIONAL WELLNESS

The Occupational Wellness Dimension involves participating in activities that provide meaning and purpose and reflect personal values, interests, and beliefs, including employment.

AREA	THINK ABOUT...	RESOURCES
Work Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you involved in a career or volunteer work that fits your values? If retired, are you planning to do something every day? • Do you have an open line of communication with your employer/ coworkers? • Does your work offer personal satisfaction and stimulation, and allow you to contribute your talents, gifts, and knowledge? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about where you are in your career and life and pursue jobs that will work well within that framework. • Explore all of your career options but review jobs on Careerbuilder.com or Monster.com. • If you receive disability benefits, explore your work options without losing SSI/SSDI benefits until you can support yourself. To calculate the amount you can earn, go to: http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10069.pdf • Talk to your employer/ coworkers about how they like to communicate so everyone can be responsive to individual needs and work styles. • When something is not working at work, let people know what would help.
Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you schedule time for leisure? Are you spending time with friends, taking nature walks, scheduling massages, or doing whatever it takes to relax? • Are you thinking about how you spend time each day and considering volunteer work in the community? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research careers/employment that involve the activities you enjoy most yet provide the flexibility for a balanced life. • Keep a calendar. Be sure to look it over and schedule time for activities that you enjoy. • Use tracking tools to balance your workload. Ask for help if your workload becomes overwhelming.
Accomplishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you in a career that you look forward to and that gives you a sense of accomplishment and pride? • Are you patting yourself on the back for your accomplishments? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the time to think of what you enjoy most, and research careers/ employment in that area.

WAYS TO IMPROVE MY
OCCUPATIONAL WELLNESS



WHAT I WILL DO	WHAT I NEED



IMPROVING OUR EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

The Emotional Wellness Dimension involves the ability to express feelings, adjust to emotional challenges, cope with life’s stressors, and enjoy life. It includes knowing our strengths as well as what we want to get better at, and living and working on our own but letting others help us from time to time.

AREA	THINK ABOUT...	RESOURCES
Feelings/ Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you allow yourself to be open to and acknowledge your feelings without judgment? • Have you found and developed safe relationships with people or groups where you can express your feelings and thoughts? • Do you see challenges as opportunities for growth? • Do you recognize your limitations and learn from your mistakes? • Are you taking responsibility for your actions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect each day on your emotions, what can they teach you, and how you can express them. • Consider using a journal to record feelings and thoughts. • Develop regular habits that help you process and deal with your feelings effectively so you move forward in fulfilling your emotional needs. • Find a place where you feel the most comfortable and go there when you feel a need for comfort, quiet space, or safety.
Self-Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you joined support groups, or thought about starting one? • Do you write your thoughts in a journal, listen to music, or talk to family or friends when you are in need? • Have you tried yoga, breathing, or meditation to remain calm and centered? • Are you maintaining a daily routine? • Do you leave yourself plenty of time to get to work and other obligations? • Are you eating some meals without distractions, like checking your phone or watching TV? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover what you like to do best, and do it often. It will help keep your spirits and emotions up. • Find an outlet for physical activity, such as a sports league or a gym/fitness center. • Take some time to yourself regularly. • Identify resources that can help you with a sleep schedule or ideas for meal planning. • Practice positive self-affirmations. Develop a positive statement to repeat to yourself daily. When you change your thoughts, you can change your mood and attitude.
Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you learning to manage stress in ways that work for your lifestyle? • Do you recognize stress triggers and appreciate that you are not your feelings? Feelings are fleeting and will pass. • Do you welcome and cultivate positive, empowering thoughts and emotions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a step back when in a stressful situation. • Practice deep breathing or other relaxation techniques. • Try out different coping exercises or strategies when not in a stressful situation. When challenges arise, you will be better prepared to deal with them. • Practice finding positives (a silver lining) in something that you feel is negative. Support others in doing this, as well.



WAYS TO IMPROVE MY
EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

WHAT I WILL DO	WHAT I NEED

Learn more about the Eight Dimensions of Wellness.
VISIT WWW.SAMHSA.GOV/WELLNESS-INITIATIVE