

Wellness and Its Dimensions

Wellness is a broad term that refers to the overall health that a person enjoys. It involves the intersection of several dimensions, each playing a crucial role in a person's general well-being. Dr. Bill Hettler's seminal work in the area set the stage for the Wellness Centers that have opened in various colleges around the country. In 1976, he co-founded the National Wellness Institute and created what is called the Six Dimensions of Wellness.

Wellness and Support Services at Schenectady County Community College has adapted Dr. Hettler's work. The ten dimensions included in our model are described below, and form the bedrock of the programming efforts of our unit.

Emotional Wellness involves your ability to recognize, feel and express emotions. It includes the actions you take when expressing your feelings as well as the tools that you use to manage your emotions and the ups and downs that life brings. It also includes your self-acceptance, self-concept and the degree of enthusiasm for being.

Tips to Develop and Maintain Emotional Wellness

- Recognize your feelings and accept them.
- Be aware of your strengths and weaknesses.
- Set realistic goals and expectations.
- Use your mistakes as opportunities to learn.
- Look for the positive in life's events.
- Take time to relax, laugh, and do something you enjoy.
- Use positive self-talk (e.g., I am doing a good job; I look good) and avoid negative self-talk.
- Learn what mindfulness is and the mindfulness strategies you can use for stress management.
- Be a friend to yourself as well as others.
- Surround yourself by people who care about you and have a positive outlook.
- Seek assistance from a counselor if you feel overwhelmed; go to Schenectady County Community College's Wellness and Support Services Center for referral information (Elston 222).

Intellectual Wellness focuses on your awareness of your mental processes as well as the degree to which you actively engage in learning, creative endeavors, and other mentally stimulating activities. It also includes your ability to problem solve and critically analyze information.

Tips to Develop and Maintain Intellectual Wellness

- Read something every day.
- Remember that everything that is in print or presented in the media is not necessarily true; use your critical thinking skills to determine your position about what is presented.
- Open yourself to new ideas and perspectives.
- Challenge yourself to see all sides of the issues that confront you.
- Engage in intellectually stimulating activities during your spare time (e.g., strategy games such as chess, puzzles, etc.).
- Take courses that are intellectually challenging to you, but are not so difficult that they overwhelm you.
- Think about the ways that you learn best and implement study strategies using those approaches.
- Set up a study schedule to prepare for your classes. • Work with a study partner to prepare for your classes.
- Use the resources at Schenectady County Community College to augment your learning. Go to the following website for specific information about these resources: http://www.sunysccc.edu/academic/devstudy/learning_center.html
- Think about learning as a life-long process.

Social Wellness focuses on the verbal and nonverbal interactions that you have with individuals and groups in your immediate surroundings and the larger community. It includes the choices you make regarding personal relationships and community involvement.

Tips to Develop and Maintain Social Wellness

- Seek social connections with others through participation in various events and membership in student clubs that interest you.
- Seek connections with others in the community by volunteering at an organization that is meaningful to you.
- Take time for friends and family.
- Remember that the development and maintenance of meaningful relationships involves time and good communication.
- Maintain healthy relationships through mutual respect and support.
- If a relationship is unhealthy and hurtful, separate yourself from it.
- Be cognizant of the time commitments you can successfully manage; it is better to be involved in less activities and be successful than to be involved in more activities and overextend yourself.

Multicultural Wellness focuses on the relationship that you have with your own cultural heritage as well as your interaction with the cultural heritage of others. It also includes the way you relate to the history, ideas, and belief systems derived from perspectives that differ from your personal background.

Tips to Develop and Maintain Multicultural Wellness

- Participate in events and classes that focus on cultures different from your own.
- Think about the assumptions that you make about individuals who have a different cultural background than you; then ask yourself the basis of those assumptions.
- Seek out friendships with people of different backgrounds.
- Learn about your own cultural background and engage in respectful discussion with others of a different background.
- Read articles and books by and about individuals who have a different belief system and cultural background than you.

Financial Wellness focuses on your understanding of your financial situation, your ability to manage money, and the responsibility that you demonstrate when making financial decisions. Financial wellness includes both short-term and long-term planning.

Tips to Develop and Maintain Financial Wellness

- Keep aware of your financial situation--the amount of money to which you have immediate access and the amount of money to which you might have later access.
- Prioritize your expenses in accordance with your long-term goals. For example, if you have limited money and must choose between getting an expensive phone or buying textbooks for your classes, buy the textbooks since they are necessary resources for success in your college classes.
- Keep informed about the scholarships, grants, and other financial aid to which you might be eligible and apply, if appropriate. Be sure to give yourself enough time to gather all the material that you might need for the application (e.g., documentation about your financial situation, letters of recommendation, personal statement from you, etc.).
- If you have a financial aid package, be sure that you understand everything about it. For example: If you have a loan, make sure you know when it needs to be paid back; be aware of any grade point average you need to maintain for your financial aid; be aware of any paperwork you may need to complete along with the deadlines that must be met to maintain your financial aid package, etc.

- Avoid getting into credit card debt. If you have a credit card, pay off the balance in full each month.
- Go to Schenectady County Community College's Financial Aid Home Page for important information about financial aid and the procedures you must follow to obtain such aid: <http://www.sunysccc.edu/adm-fin/financial.htm>
- Go to the following link for tips from the National Endowment for Financial Education: <http://www.smartaboutmoney.org/Portals/0/ResourceCenter/40MoneyManagementTips.pdf>

Physical Wellness focuses the manner in which you care for your body, your ability to recognize symptoms that require attention, as well as your ability to seek out and obtain medical assistance, when appropriate. It includes your attitude and actions in relation to such areas as nutrition, exercise, alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and sex.

Tips to Develop and Maintain Physical Wellness

- Develop and implement an exercise program.
- Get sufficient rest.
- Be mindful of safe sex.
- Avoid smoking, harmful drugs, and excess alcohol.
- Get regular check-ups with your primary medical doctor.
- Make use of the Schenectady YMCA facilities (433 State Street). Membership is free for students and discounted for faculty/staff. Students must show a valid SCCC ID and copy of class schedule to document SCCC affiliation; faculty/staff must show a valid SCCC ID and a recent pay stub.

Nutritional Wellness focuses on the choices you make regarding the foods you eat. It includes examining the nutritional value of foods, portion control, and how to eat a healthy and balanced diet on a budget.

Tips to Develop and Maintain Nutritional Wellness

- Shop the periphery of the supermarket where you will find foods in their purest and healthiest forms. The inside aisles contain foods which are mechanically processed and include added sugars, sodium and preservatives.
- Portion control is the key to a nutritionally healthy body. <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/> is an excellent resource for what to eat and how much, in addition to other nutritional wellness topics.
- Eat a balanced diet.

Occupational Wellness focuses on your career choice, ambition, career preparation, and job performance. It also relates to how you feel about the career choice you made.

Tips to Develop and Maintain Occupational Wellness

- Think about your interests, abilities, beliefs, and personality as well as job prospects when you decide upon a career preparation program.
- Make an appointment with someone from the appropriate Schenectady County Community College career and employment office to talk about your goals and how to achieve them. If you are a current student or alumnus, go to the following link for further information about services and corresponding contact information: <http://www.sunysccc.edu/student/jps/staffmission.htm> If you are part of the Capital District community, but not part of the SCCC college community, go to the SUNY College and Career Counseling website to learn about the available services and corresponding contact information: <http://www.sunysccc.edu/student/SUNY%20CCCC%20flyer1.html>
- Create a current resume, getting feedback from Schenectady County Community College's Career and Employment Services staff or SUNY College and Career Counseling staff, as appropriate.
- Get experience in your field of interest by volunteer work, internships, and/or entry-level positions.
- Network with professionals in your field of interest by attending conferences, joining related organizations, speaking with professional in the field, etc.

Environmental Wellness focuses on the role you take in caring for your physical surroundings from the immediate environment to the planet, in general. It includes issues related to water pollution and air pollution. It includes the safety precautions you take within your surroundings from personal crime prevention measures to the avoidance of second hand smoke. It also involves the impact that your environment has on disability and access-related issues.

Tips to Develop and Maintain Environmental Wellness

- Be aware of your environment; think about how you contribute to your surroundings and what you can do to make a better environment.
- Recycle paper, glass, and paper.
- Conserve gas and energy.
- Go to the following website for additional tips on how to keep green: <http://www.ourearth.org/education/greentips.html>
- Think about precautions you can take during inclement weather (e.g., wear appropriate non-slip shoes/boots during icy/snowy conditions; modulate your driving speed, etc.).
- Think about safety issues to consider in relation to various appliances you use at home and at work (e.g., be sure to unplug portable heaters and fans when leaving the area where the appliances are used).
- See the National Safety Council Website for environmental safety tips related to a variety of issues: <http://www.nsc.org/pages/home.aspx>
- When walking at night, stay in well-lit areas and walk with someone.
- See the NYPD personal safety tips at: http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/crime_prevention/personalsafety.shtml
- If you feel unsafe in your surroundings when you are about to leave campus, contact Schenectady County Community College's Security and request an escort to your vehicle. Security is located at the ground floor main entrance of Elson Hall (Ph: (518) 381-1308).
- Go to Schenectady County Community College's Campus Safety website for safety information and procedures: <http://www.sunysccc.edu/student/campussafety.html>
- See the following PowerPoint about safety designed by SCCC's Campus Safety Director. <http://www.sunysccc.edu/wellness/images/SafetyPP 9-13.pptx>

Spiritual Wellness focuses on the way you understand, search, and find meaning in life's events and overall human existence. It includes the manner in which you develop and demonstrate an appreciation for the expanse of life, the universe and its natural forces.

Tips to Develop and Maintain Spiritual Wellness

- Find a space and manner to be with yourself to think and connect with the world around you (e.g., take a walk through a nature trail, garden, park, or museum; find a quiet room to sit and think; find a beautiful tree to sit beneath and think).
- Take time to reflect and explore who you are and where you are going in life.
- Honor the religious beliefs that are meaningful to you.
- Think about the decisions you are making; use your values and beliefs to guide those decisions.
- Meditate for a short time each day to relax and get in touch with your inner self.
- Attend a workshop or lecture about philosophy; read a book about philosophy.
- Talk with a trusted person about your inner thoughts and life's questions (e.g., a friend, relative, religious leader, therapist).