

# Educational and Career Counseling Center

## Starr 313, (231)591-3057

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### Self Care and Wellness: Taking Care of Your Self so You Can be Your Best

Self care is a vital part of maintaining good health and a vibrant life. It's a way of living that incorporates behaviors that help you to be refreshed, replenish your personal motivation, and grow as a person.

**Wellness is an interactive process of becoming aware of and practicing healthy choices to create a more successful and balanced lifestyle. Wellness is:**

- A direction in which by its nature, moves us toward a more proactive, responsible and healthier existence.
- The integration of the body, mind, and spirit.
- The loving acceptance of ourselves today and the exciting free search for who we choose to become tomorrow.
- Choice living; a compilation of the daily decisions we make that lead us to that person we choose to become.

**Wellness** is the framework that you can use to organize, understand, and balance your own growth and development. Everything you do, every decision you make, every thought you think, and every attitude and belief you hold fits into this framework made up of the following six basic concepts:

**Social Wellness** involves developing friendships, healthy sexual behaviors, and the ability to interact comfortably with others. Social wellness is important for maintaining harmony in personal and community environments. The social dimension encourages contributing to the common welfare of your community. It emphasizes the coexistence of you, society, and the environment along with the pursuit of harmony in your life. As you become socially well, your impact on society and nature becomes more apparent. Throughout your journey, you'll seek out ways to preserve balance around you. You actively seek ways to enhance relationships through better communication and encouraging a healthy living environment. You will learn it is better to live in harmony than in conflict.

**Intellectual Wellness** involves the strong desire to learn from challenges and experiences. Intellectual wellness is important for encouraging ongoing intellectual growth and experiencing creative yet stimulating mental activities that will provide you with the foundation to discover, process, and evaluate information effectively. An intellectually well person uses the available resources, in and out of the classroom, to expand their knowledge and skills for the betterment of society.

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As you grow, you will continually seek issues relating to problem solving, creative thinking and learning. You will actively seek the opportunity to expand and challenge your mind through creative endeavors. Your natural instinct to remain abreast of current issues will surface and become satisfied through reading books, magazines and newspapers and pursuing other interests.

**Spiritual Wellness** involves the willingness to seek meaning and purpose in human existence; regardless of your religious beliefs. Spiritual wellness is important for allowing you to be open to diverse multi-cultural beliefs and backgrounds because of your comfort level with yourself and with your belief structure. Spiritual wellness coincides with the exploration of the meaning of life. It seeks the development of a deep appreciation of all life and natural forces in existence.

The question “Who am I and why do I exist?” is the starting point of your journey into spiritual wellness. Through your journey, you will observe and appreciate the beauty of your surroundings and begin to learn the value of things you cannot understand. As you grow spiritually, you seek a harmony between your emotions allowing for avoidance of emotional peaks and valleys. You continually allow your actions to be guided by your beliefs and values.

**Emotional Wellness** involves having the ability to acknowledge and accept a wide range of feelings in oneself as well as in others. Emotional wellness is important in order to be able to freely express and manage one's own feelings, to develop positive self-esteem in order to arrive at personal decisions based upon the integration of one's attitudes and behaviors. Emotional wellness centers on the acceptance of your emotions and feelings. Included is the ability to realistically evaluate your limitations and effectively cope with stress. An emotionally well individual maintains healthy and satisfying relationships with others.

On the path to emotional wellness, your acceptance and awareness of a wide range of feelings in yourself and others becomes more apparent. The ability to manage, understand and express your emotions will be enhanced leading to the development of relationships based on mutual commitment, trust, and respect.

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**Physical Wellness** involves regular physical activities, proper nutrition and health care, such as exercise or sports, and personal hygiene. Cardiovascular strength and endurance, muscular strength and endurance, and flexibility are all also part of physical wellness. Physical wellness is important because activities leading to high levels of wellness, including nutritional knowledge, exercise, and appropriate use of the medical system are encouraged while detrimental activities, including the consumption of drugs and excessive alcohol are discouraged.

Throughout your journey to physical wellness, you will strive to spend more attention to building flexibility, cardiovascular, and muscular abilities. The relationship between sound nutritional practices and your health becomes more apparent and appreciated. You will understand your body's warning signs and take responsibility by appropriately adjusting your lifestyle.

**Occupational Wellness** involves the integration of various components of the wellness framework into planning for a healthy future, such as career, family and future wellness. It also involves gaining personal satisfaction and finding enrichment in your life through work. Occupational wellness is important because it develops the understanding that decisions and values may change as new information and experiences are attained. Your choice of profession, job satisfaction, career ambitions, and personal performance are all important components of occupational wellness.

You will begin to value the importance of not only your own personal satisfaction, but also your contribution to society. You will choose both paid and unpaid activities based on your skills, talent, and values. You are on the right path when your work and hobbies are exciting and rewarding.

### **Give Yourself Permission to Put Yourself First**

Taking care of your needs lays in a balanced, steady place on the middle of a continuum, with intense selfishness on one end, and extreme sacrificing what you need or want for others' sake on the other end.

Nurturing yourself is a key factor in being able to keep up strength, resolve, motivation and inner resources to continue to give to others, whether that be your immediate partner, family and other important people in your inner circle, or the larger community around you.

You might consider that doing too much for others could deprive them of the opportunity to learn how to provide their own self care.

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### Make the Time to Take Care of Yourself!

If you do a "self care audit", you will likely find that some of the activities you spend your time on now, could be better spent "recharging your own battery" Mental sharpness decreases after a short period of concentrated study. You likely need more "true" breaks, not just time killers stolen from study time you rarely spend in any really relaxing or satisfying recreation.

### Give Yourself Permission to Do It Alone and Do It With Others

The best balance is achieved with a combination of time shared with others, as well as some time alone. Your attitude of looking for opportunities to practice Self Care can go with you into almost anywhere.

### Incorporating Wellness into My Life - Action Plan

- **Awareness:** Where am I unbalanced?
- **Knowledge:** What options do I have?
- **Decision Making:** What options should I consider?
- **Planning:** What is the most realistic plan?
- **Action:** When, where, and how can I take action?

Skeptical?-Experiment! Set up a 30 day trial and see how you feel before and after.