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WHAT IS WELLNESS?

OBJECTIVES

After reading the chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- Explain the traditional definition of health
- Define wellness
- Discuss the history of wellness and its scope
- List and define the six dimensions of wellness
- List and define the stages of change when modifying behavior
- List and define the types of motivation

Health traditionally has been defined as the “absence of disease.” A well-known adage states, “If you do not have your health, you do not have anything.” This is quite true. However, a modern, expanded view of health is “wellness”—often these terms are used interchangeably. Wellness exceeds the traditional view of health, and takes into consideration lifestyle behaviors and other actions of individuals in overcoming obstacles and limitations to living a rich, meaningful life. Wellness is determined by the individual and for the individual, with the goal of optimizing the individual’s potential. But wellness in and of itself is not a new concept. It has been a goal of mankind for thousands of years.

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ORIGIN OF WELLNESS

Achieving optimal well-being has been a goal of mankind since ancient Greece. The ancient Greeks valued a harmony of the mind, body, and spirit, and believed that through the development of a sound mind, one could acquire a sound body.¹ This belief is evident in the writings of the famous fifth century B.C.E. Greek philosopher, Plato, who wrote:



Plato's writings reflected the Greek ideal of a life of balance, characterized by a harmony of the mind, body, and spirit.

Gymnastics will hold the next place to Music in the education of our young men. This is my view of the case: not that a good body will necessarily make the soul good: but that a good soul will by its proper virtue render the body as perfect as it can be. We must therefore first administer the requisite treatment to the mind, and then charge it with the direction of the body.²

In this passage, Plato indicates that proper mental preparation can strengthen the soul, which, in turn, allows individuals to reach their full potential physically. The mind, soul, and body are not separate; they are related and work together to strengthen the individual as a whole. The ancient Greeks believed that man was formed from various dimensions, and that each was interrelated and affected by the others. This is noted in their belief of the ideal lifestyle:

The {Greek} ideal of life, a balance of moral, mental, physical, and aesthetic living, along with civic participation and moderation in all things, was the foundation of much of the education of the youth of means, and of life for the adults.²

Not only did the ancient Greeks recognize that various dimensions were involved in the idiosyncrasy of the individual, but that a balance of these dimensions was required to fulfill their ideal. The Greek ideal, albeit with a modern interpretation, is very much alive today, and is recognized as the principle of wellness. Even the ancient Roman physician, Galen, recognized the importance of the Greek ideal. He is credited with saying, "Since both in importance and time, health precedes disease, so we ought to consider first how health may best be preserved, and then how one may best cure disease."

MODERN VIEW OF WELLNESS

In 1961, Dr. Halbert Dunn³ coined the term “wellness” to describe the state of balancing the mind, body, and soul harmoniously. In his definition, he revitalized the Greek ideal:

Wellness is an integrated method of functioning which is oriented toward maximizing the potential of which the individual is capable. It requires that the individual maintain a continuum of balance and purposeful direction within the environment in which he is functioning.

In his definition of wellness, Dunn describes many of the qualities of the Greek ideal. He states that an individual must have “an integrated method of functioning”; that is, all dimensions of the individual must be related, balanced, and synthesized into a whole for the individual to be well. This synthesis is similar to the ancient Greeks’ idea of a “balance of moral, mental, physical, and aesthetic living.” However, Dunn includes the term “balance” in his definition. He believes maintenance of balance is required for the individual to reach “high-level wellness.” It is not enough for individuals to “complete” the fulfillment of their potential. They must, instead, maximize, or as Dunn describes, maintain their potential because “what is complete today might be quite incomplete tomorrow. . . [b]ut maximizing means maintaining completeness from day to day.” Therefore, according to Dunn, if individuals are to obtain high-level wellness, maximization of their potential must be reached and maintained daily through the balance of their wellness dimensions. Basically, wellness requires active participa-



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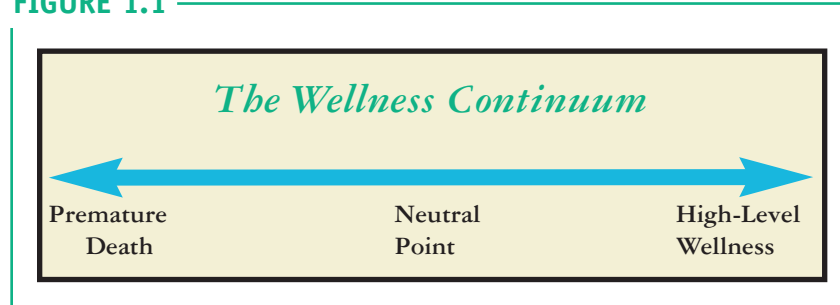
*Personal reflection
is necessary for
achieving high-
level wellness*

–NOTES–**REFLECTION
POINT****Consider This:**

How would you describe your highest level of wellness at this point in your life?

How or what may happen in your life to replace this or to move you closer to premature death?

tion from the individual. Wellness is not a static condition, but a constant process on a continuum (see Figure 1.1).

FIGURE 1.1

The wellness continuum provides an excellent illustration of the active participation required of everyone. On the left of the continuum is premature death, and on the right is high-level wellness. Premature death is caused by excessively unhealthy habits such as smoking or living a sedentary lifestyle. High-level wellness is attained by engaging in healthy behaviors and adopting positive attitudes toward a productive life. As Dunn asserts, “Wellness is a direction in progress toward an ever-higher potential of functioning. It involves the total individual as a personality in all of his uniqueness.” This uniqueness refers to the various dimensions of wellness used to formulate wellness paradigms.

S T U D Y T I P :

Health traditionally has been defined as the “absence of disease.” *Wellness* takes into consideration lifestyle behaviors and other actions that lead to living a rich, meaningful life.

WELLNESS PARADIGMS

The earliest paradigms of wellness were multi-dimensional and stressed self-responsibility.⁴⁻⁸ Ardell⁴ writes:

It {self-responsibility} is the philosopher's stone, the mariner's compass, and the ring of power to a high level wellness lifestyle. Without an active sense of accountability for your own well-being, you won't have the necessary motivation to lead a health-enhancing lifestyle. That is, you are not like-

ly to put the energy into nutrition, stress management, fitness, and environmental shaping that is required for optimal health...self-responsibility represents your keystone to a life of high level wellness.



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Wellness is considered a holistic approach that involves balancing six intimately related dimensions: physical, occupational, social, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional, all within the environment in which one functions.

The premise of these models was that individuals designed, implemented, and followed their own program to high-level wellness through an integration of all dimensions, with each being of equal importance.

Today, wellness is considered to be a holistic approach that combines lifestyle and environment and involves the balancing of six “intimately related” dimensions, i.e., physical, occupational, social, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional (see Figure 1.2).⁵⁻⁶ The dimensions of wellness are as follows:

PHYSICAL: the functional operation of the human body. This deals primarily with diet, exercise, medical self-care, drug and tobacco usage, and sleep habits.

OCCUPATIONAL: finding self-satisfying work, seeking a balance between one’s career and personal life, and having the financial wherewithal to live a desired lifestyle.

SOCIAL: developing satisfying relationships with others, and living harmoniously with others.

SPIRITUAL: developing one’s inner self and identifying values of right and wrong that give one a purpose in life and provide philosophical guidelines for living.

INTELLECTUAL: thinking creatively and critically, with the goal of always learning and staying informed.

EMOTIONAL: recognizing and accepting feelings, strengths, and limitations that allow one to manage emotions and cope with stressful events, while still maintaining intimate relationships.

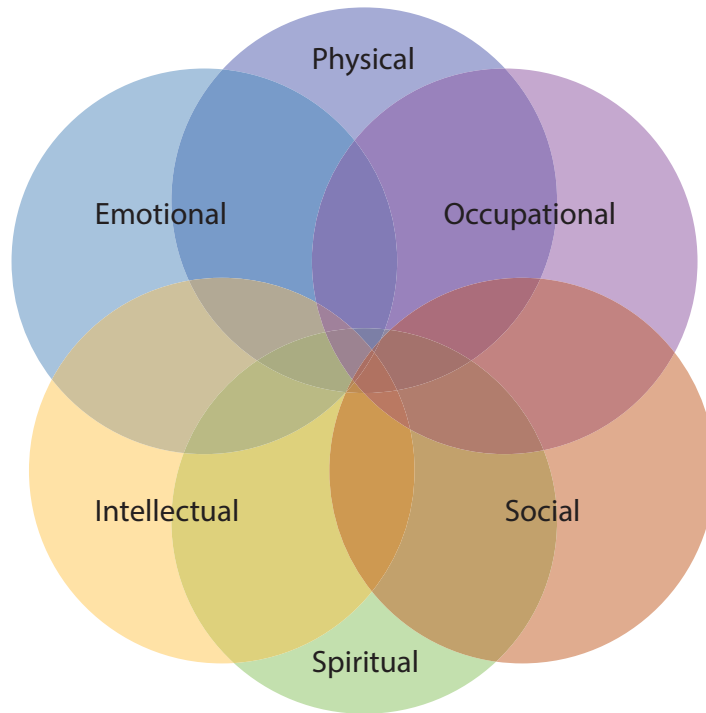
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Close, personal relationships are important for social and emotional wellness.

**FIGURE 1.2**

Dimensions of Wellness

All dimensions are within the environment in which one functions.



The six dimensions function separately, but are interrelated. Each dimension affects the individual singly, but also can affect the other dimensions. Simply put, the dimensions are enmeshed and balanced to form a whole. This concept of balance and that each dimension affects the other is addressed by the idea of “holism.”⁷

Holism suggests that a person is “one single individuality, and it is the unified whole that determines the characteristics of the parts”; these “parts” are related to one another intimately.⁷ Meaning, if one part changes, the other parts will incur corresponding, and perhaps equal, or even greater, changes. This process is termed “interrelatedness”; in other words, everything is a give and take. When one part is weakened, it can, and often does, cause other areas to be affected negatively. However, the converse is also

true. An improvement in one or more areas can prompt other areas to develop beneficially, as well.⁷

To illustrate the interrelatedness of the dimensions, imagine a three-dimensional cube. Each side of the cube, made up of subcubes, represents a separate dimension that combines to create a whole: the individual. This paradigm is analogous to the popular puzzle called the Rubik's Cube® (i.e., a six-sided cube with each side constructed from nine, smaller, movable subcubes of the same color).⁶ The cube is interrelated; if one subcube is moved, it has ramifications on the whole cube. When each side of the cube is labeled with a dimension of wellness, a "Wellness Cube" is produced. When a dimension is considered to be well, it is theoretically represented on the cube by having all subcubes in their proper position and of one color. When each side of the cube is its respective color, high-level wellness results.

The principles of wellness apply to everyone. Individuals can be ill or disabled, and, thus, be not technically "healthy," but they can still be "well."⁸ Remember, wellness means maximizing one's potential and improving the quality of one's life. Disabled individuals can work within their limitations, e.g., complete a marathon in a wheelchair (physical), perform well on the job (occupational), have lasting, fulfilling relationships

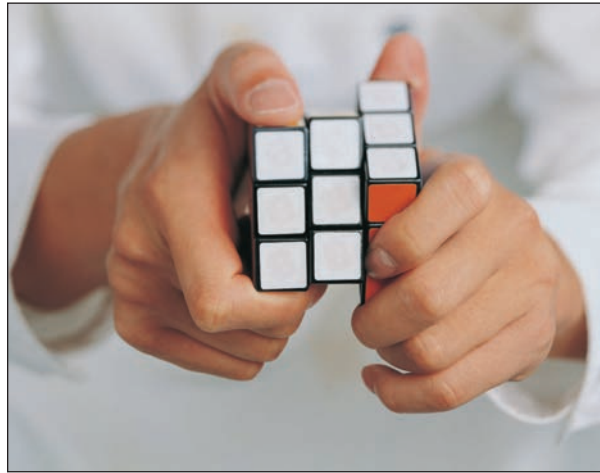


One's religiosity is often used to guide one's spirituality, but it is not the only thing nor is it even required. Many derive their purpose from other sources.

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STUDY TIP:

The principles of wellness apply to everyone—even disabled individuals. Wellness means maximizing one's potential and improving the overall quality of one's life.

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Think of wellness as a three-dimensional cube, with each side made up of subcubes. If one subcube is moved, it has ramifications on the whole cube. When each side of the cube is its respective color, high-level wellness results.

(social), and improve the overall quality of their lives. When the dimensions of wellness are enhanced to their optimal potential and integrated to form a whole, an individual may be well, despite being less than “healthy.”

Integration of the various wellness dimensions is of chief importance. Often, individuals are concerned with only one or two aspects of wellness, and they neglect other areas. For example, some individuals believe that physical fitness is a panacea. Consequently, they are obsessed with its development and work on only physical fitness, but budget no time for other dimensions, such as socialization. Conversely, others just develop socialization skills and neglect intellectual and physical development. Thus, these individuals may be free of disease (i.e., “healthy”), but they may not be truly “well.” One might ask: How can these individuals become well? The answer depends on how highly the dimensions are valued. When someone is improving one dimension of wellness, conscious efforts should be taken to improve all other dimensions, as well. An individual must seek a balance of the wellness components and synthesize them into a whole. Basically, “as people work to improve one aspect of their [wellness], they also need to work to improve others.”⁸

REFLECTION POINT

Consider This:

What are the priorities in your life?

In what dimensions of wellness do these priorities fall?

How will these priorities affect the each dimension of wellness?

READINESS FOR CHANGE

The basic principles of wellness are neither complicated nor difficult to understand: One should eat right, exercise, refrain from smoking, practice moderation, and live a well-rounded lifestyle, with a productive purpose. Of course, there are more components to wellness than these, and specific wellness regimens (e.g., what to eat, how to exercise) will vary per individual. Still, most individuals have a general understanding of what consti-

tutes “wellness,” and very often are aware of the actions and lifestyle choices that foster a healthy lifestyle. The problem is that many individuals do very little to promote wellness in their own lives, and often knowingly engage in activities that are very harmful to them in the long term (e.g., smoking, overeating). Even though most individuals are aware of basic wellness concepts and how to achieve a healthy lifestyle, few actually do it, and more often than not, many fail to try. Why? The answer is simple: Knowledge and good intentions are not enough to change behavior for the long term. What is needed is a stern commitment to change personal habits and a daily dedication to maintain these changes. Unfortunately, for most, this sort of commitment is difficult to start and even more difficult to maintain.

Lifestyle habits, even very destructive ones, such as smoking, are difficult to break. Many individuals do not know how to effectively initiate a change, often feeling overwhelmed to begin. Moreover, lifestyle changes rarely happen overnight. Lasting changes are part of a continuum of gradual modifications to behavior, resulting from associated modifications in an individual's thought processes. Each individual goes through “stages of change” (see sidebar *The Five Stages of Change in the Transtheoretical Model*, p. 12) on the way to lasting lifestyle modification. Understanding these stages and recognizing which stage currently applies to one's situation is crucial.

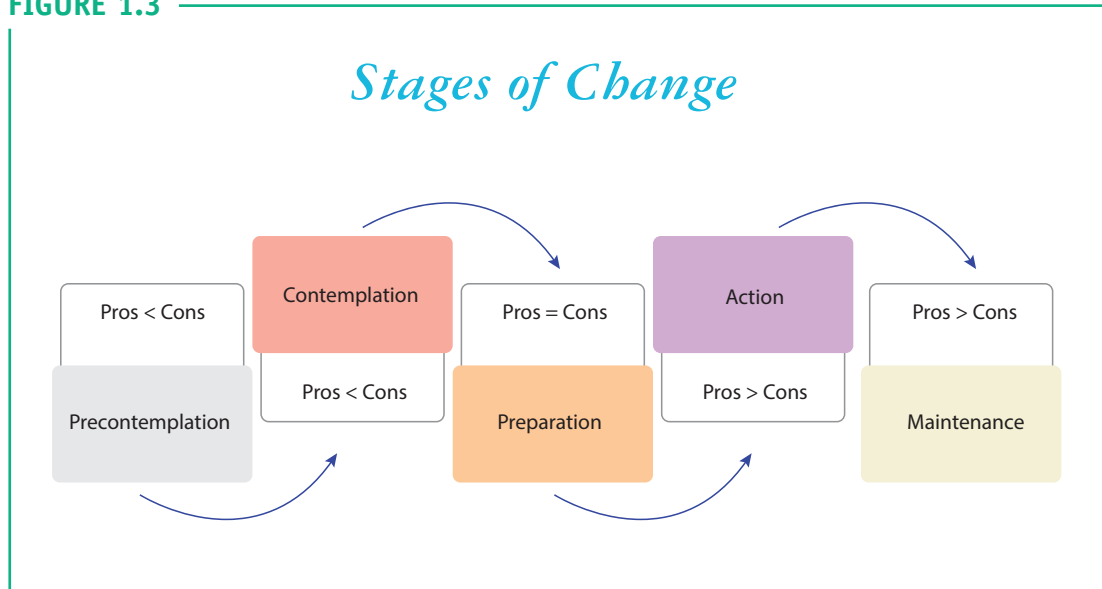
The stages of change are not linear, but cyclical—meaning that just because individuals leave one stage of change does not mean they will never be at that stage again (see Figure 1.3.). Individuals may at one time have been habitually practicing good lifestyle behaviors, but are now not doing

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Despite knowing that smoking is very dangerous, many individuals still choose to smoke. Why?

FIGURE 1.3

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so. They will likely be back at the precontemplation stage at this time, and will have to realign their thought processes and actions all over again, even though they once were very dedicated to wellness. No amount of experience, knowledge, or guidance will result in positive lifestyle action unless an individual is ready to make the change. By acknowledging the state of one's current "change readiness," a personalized plan of education and then action can be constructed that will enable one to successfully meet the challenges of these changes and habitually put them into practice.

MOTIVATION

Motivation, or "why" someone behaves a certain way, is vitally important to behavior change. Numerous individuals try to change their respective behavior for a variety of reasons, but few who begin actually accomplish their established goals. Why do so many fail? It could go back to the individual's readiness for change, but it is more likely the individual's lack of motivation, or more importantly, the use of improper motivation.

Two basic types of motivation exist: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation involves external rewards, such as a special treat, after attaining a goal. A well-established example of this with respect to wellness is when a woman rewards herself with a special food item—say, a candy bar—after she loses a specific amount of weight. It is great that she has decided to

modify her behavior to lose some weight (that is, if she is overweight to begin with and does not have an unrealistic body image), but rewarding herself with something that she has deprived herself of is not the way to create long-term behavior change. Rewards such as these are generally short lived, as external motivators soon lose their appeal and effectiveness, and are rarely successful in long-term maintenance of behavior change. Few are going to modify their lives daily for the basic pleasure of eating a candy bar. However, a more appropriate extrinsic motivator would be if the woman chose to reward herself with a new outfit after achieving a certain level of weight loss. This extrinsic motivator would then allow her to maintain her healthy lifestyle and to continue to allow her to be motivated toward achieving her goal.

On the other hand, internal rewards are a different matter, and they constitute what is called intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is paramount to behavior change, as it reflects an individual's true values. Referring back to the example of a woman losing weight, if the woman wants to lose weight to be healthier and to improve her own self-esteem, then losing the weight in and of itself is the reward. She will not need an extrinsic reward to support the behavior modification because the reward is intrinsic and in line with her values (NOTE: This does not mean one should refrain from using external rewards, but external rewards should not be used exclusively for long-term success). In fact, the former extrinsic reward of eating a candy bar would now be viewed very lowly compared to the reward of maintaining a healthy weight. It comes to a matter of values. The woman in our example now values maintaining her healthy weight more than the pleasure of eating a candy bar every day. Values are important to long-term behavior change, and linking one's values with one's goals is essential for long-term success.

Self-efficacy is an important determinant of being able to reach established goals. Self-efficacy is "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations."¹¹ Essentially, it means that "one must believe in order to achieve." One's self-efficacy is determined by multiple factors, but ultimately our experiences shape our beliefs about what will happen in the future, either positively or negatively.



Extrinsic motivation involves external rewards, such as a special treat, after attaining a goal. Intrinsic motivation involves a behavior change that is the reward in itself.

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STUDY TIP:

Values are important to long-term behavior change, and linking one's values with one's goals is essential for long-term success.

—NOTES—**REFLECTION POINT****Consider This:**

What behavior have you attempted to change in the past?

Were you successful? If yes, what helped you to successfully achieve that goal? If no, what prevented you from achieving that goal?

How do you feel now about behavior change based on your success or failure?

Normally it takes several attempts to change a behavior. Behaviors are habits that we develop, and breaking habits is not easy.

How can you use other experiences to help you overcome your barriers?

What can you do differently to achieve your goal?

The following two questions (originally developed by McGlynn,¹² but slightly modified here) should be answered by individuals who want to evaluate their present wellness and modify their current behaviors:

1. *What are my chances of increasing my overall wellness?*
2. *Will the changes brought about by my behavior be of value to me?*

McGlynn¹² suggests the answer to the first question is “relatively easy: Excellent.” He is right. Individuals can increase their overall wellness with several simple personal habits, so the chances of increasing one’s overall wellness are extremely high. It simply is a matter of values and motivation.

The second question, however, must be answered by each individual, as values differ among individuals. That said, individuals should consider whether changes—say, in physical fitness—are of value to them. Physiological and psychological benefits occur with improved fitness, and many would find these benefits to be of great value, once achieved. McGlynn states that “research indicates that we all have certain basic needs in common that must be fulfilled to lead a balanced life,” and he lists satisfaction of achievement as one of those. To illustrate this concept, when a student earns a well-deserved “A” in a course, a sense of mastery occurs and



Readiness for change is critical. Individuals must take an honest look at their wellness levels and determine whether modifying their behavior will add value to their lives.

THE FIVE STAGES OF CHANGE IN THE TRANSTHEORETICAL MODEL

In 1982, James Prochaska and Carlo DiClemente developed a “Transtheoretical Model of Change,” based on their study of 872 people who were attempting to quit smoking.⁹ They defined five stages of change, as follows:

- Precontemplation (not thinking of change at all)
- Contemplation (thinking of change, but not actively preparing)
- Preparation (preparing for change)
- Action (making the change)
- Maintenance (making the change a habit and part of a periodic routine)

The significance of the model is the understanding that as individuals progress through various stages of change on the way to lasting behavioral modification, they do not simply leave one stage and never return—they may have to repeat certain stages multiple times.¹⁰ In fact, the entire sequence of changes may be repeated multiple times before lasting change is achieved. This repetition through the stages of change is quite normal and to be expected. Some “relapse” into less-than-desired behavior is normal and is not an indication of permanent failure, as long as the individual continues to work through the stages of change for behavior modification. Individuals in each of these stages respond to different stimuli to progress to the next stage of change. So one must recognize which stimuli are most effective in enhancing one’s progression through the stages of change. Also, just because action has been initiated does not mean one has achieved habitual change; social and personal reinforcements are needed to maintain the change. Recognizing these reinforcements—and ultimately and consistently promoting them—is important.



People who attempt to modify their behavior typically experience five stages of change.

STAGE OF CHANGE	CHARACTERISTICS	TECHNIQUES
PRE-CONTEMPLATION	One currently is not considering change. “Ignorance is bliss”	One must validate readiness and recognize that the decision lies within one’s self. One must re-evaluate current behavior and begin self-exploration about why change is needed.
CONTEMPLATION	One is ambivalent about change, and is not considering change within the next month. “Sitting on the fence”	One must identify and promote new, positive outcome expectations to promote change.
PREPARATION	One is planning to change within the next month, and is possibly experimenting with changes. “Testing the waters”	One must identify obstacles of change. Also, social and personal support measures must be identified. Skills for behavior change must be identified and developed, focusing on small, initial steps for success.
ACTION	One is practicing new behavior for 3-6 months. “Getting in the groove”	One must structure cues and social support for bolstering self-efficacy to deal with identified obstacles. One must combat feelings of loss and focus on long-term benefits.
MAINTENANCE	One has continued commitment to sustaining new behavior for 6 months to 5 years. “Taking care of business”	One must reinforce internal and external rewards.
RELAPSE	One resumes old behaviors. “Fall from grace”	One must identify the trigger for relapse, and reassess motivation and barriers. Ultimately, one must plan stronger coping strategies to achieve lasting change.

self-confidence increases. The same is true for almost any goal that is achieved. Behavior can, and is, changed positively by many individuals to achieve certain goals. The key is that individuals must take an honest look at their wellness levels and determine if modifying behavior will add value to their lives. Ultimately, individuals must recognize that change is necessary and up to them, with self-responsibility being the key to developing high-level wellness. McGlynn writes the following concerning exercise, which is just one dimension of wellness, yet is relative to all the dimensions:

It's very easy to find excuses not to exercise. Too cold, too hot, too windy, too busy, too tired, will make it up next week—all are frequently heard. However, if you accept the goals of health-related fitness and are aware of how they relate to your self-concept, you soon will be looking for excuses to exercise.¹²

High-level wellness is attainable by every individual. Readiness for change plays a critical role, but motivation, especially intrinsic motivation that is in line with one's specific values, is paramount for long-lasting behavior change.

GOAL SETTING

When setting goals they should be meaningful and feasible. One general rule to follow when setting goals is to use "SMART" goals. SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely. When developing goals, it is best to ask the following questions:

- Is this a specific goal?
- How can I measure what has to be done to complete the goal?
- Can the goal be attained?
- How realistic is this goal given my current level of motivation and other factors in my life?
- At what point in time will the goal be achieved?

Once answers to these questions are developed, then a SMART goal has been established.

Many times in life lofty goals are set, such as being graduated from college with a bachelor's degree. Instead of waiting four to five years to determine if the goal can be attained, short-term and intermediary goals should be set to lead one toward the long-term goal. For instance, one must pass specific courses in order to earn a bachelor's degree. So, a short-term goal would be to perform all of the assigned reading and homework so that passing the

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Adding adventure to one's life is often the spark that is needed to promote fitness.



examinations is possible. An intermediary goal would be to pass all courses each term so that normal matriculation can occur. If these goals are met, the long-term goal of taking the bachelor's degree is more likely to occur. Ultimately, goals must be well designed, from a short-term, intermediary, and long-term basis to have real, meaningful results.

SUMMARY

Well-being has been recognized as an important goal of mankind since the ancient Greeks. The idea of well-being, or wellness, is that all aspects of the individual—mind, body, and spirit—are working in unison and in complete harmony, so that the individual is functioning optimally. From the early works of Dunn,³ wellness is known as the maximization of one's potential through balancing various wellness dimensions. Many wellness paradigms, moreover, were designed to facilitate the development and understanding of the wellness principle of a balanced and meaningful, healthy lifestyle.⁴⁻⁸ These paradigms of wellness represent a “whole” made up of various “parts,” termed “dimensions” (i.e., physical, occupational, social, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional), with each being affected by one's environment. The key to these models is balance through self-regulation and self-responsibility. It is also

important to realize that practicing behaviors that lead to wellness entails lifestyle changes for most individuals. The changes may be relatively minor, but the actual change process itself can be difficult to implement and to maintain. Individuals go through multiple stages of change in the progression to lasting behavioral modification, and often repeat the same stages multiple times. This is normal and to be expected. Ideally, surrounding oneself by others who have similar values can be beneficial, provided those values are in line with the SMART goals that have been set. Ultimately, however, readiness for change is important, but having the proper motivation, especially intrinsic motivation in line with one's values, is vital to achieving high-level wellness.

“In order to change we must be sick and tired of being sick and tired.”
—Unknown

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CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between the traditional view of “health” and today’s idea of “wellness”?
2. Where did wellness originate? What evidence supports this?
3. What are the six dimensions of wellness, and how are they enmeshed to form the whole individual?
4. How have the paradigms of wellness differed over time?
5. What is self-efficacy?
6. What are the stages in Prochaska and DiClemente’s Transtheoretical Model of Behavior Change?
7. What are the two types of motivation? How do they differ? Which is most important for long-term behavior change? Why?
8. What are SMART goals? How are they established?

RELATED WEBSITES

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Wellness.com
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Wellness Councils of America
www.welcoa.org

Wellness is attainable by everyone—young and old, healthy and disabled. One simply needs a stern commitment to change personal habits and a daily dedication to maintain these changes.

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