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**5-2 Activity: Reflection: Self**

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Critically analyzing mental health through the Social Science lens has profoundly informed my framework of perception, reshaping how I view wellness as a shared societal responsibility rather than an individual challenge. By exploring systemic barriers—such as accessibility, affordability, and cultural stigma—I now understand that mental health is deeply intertwined with societal structures like healthcare, education, and the economy. This realization has heightened my awareness of how inequities in these systems disproportionately affect marginalized populations, including those in rural, low-income, or culturally diverse communities.

At the same time, I approach the topic with some cynicism. While I recognize that many people genuinely need help with mental health challenges, I often feel that it has become a socially accepted way to avoid confronting life's difficulties head-on. It seems increasingly common for individuals to rely on breakdowns or medication as solutions, rather than developing resilience or working through challenges. This trend makes me question whether the growing emphasis on mental health is always beneficial or if it sometimes enables avoidance rather than personal growth.

By critically analyzing mental health, I have come to see both sides of the issue. On one hand, addressing systemic inequities is essential to creating an inclusive and resilient society; on the other, there is value in promoting personal accountability and resilience as part of the mental health conversation. Balancing these perspectives has broadened my understanding of how to approach wellness in a way that supports both individual and societal growth.

Examining my biases has had a significant impact on how I perceive the world, particularly when it comes to complex issues like mental health. Initially, I held a more skeptical view of mental health, often attributing some challenges to a lack of personal resilience or the tendency to avoid facing life's difficulties. Over time, I’ve come to realize that this perspective was influenced by my own biases, shaped by societal values that prioritize toughness and self-reliance. These biases led me to overlook the systemic factors and unique personal struggles that many people face.

Through this reflection, I’ve become more aware of the ways in which my own experiences and cultural influences shaped my understanding of mental health. This awareness has made me more open-minded, helping me recognize that mental health challenges aren’t always a matter of “toughening up” but are often influenced by deeper, systemic issues like access to care, socioeconomic status, or generational trauma. This shift has altered the way I perceive others' experiences and struggles.

Acknowledging and reflecting on my bias has changed the way I approach not only mental health but also other complex societal issues. I now understand that biases often limit our ability to see the full scope of a situation. By being more mindful of these biases, I can approach others with greater empathy and engage more thoughtfully in discussions. This awareness fosters a broader, more inclusive perspective, encouraging me to challenge assumptions and seek deeper understanding. Ultimately, recognizing my own biases has helped me see the world in a more nuanced way, where individual, cultural, and societal factors play vital roles in shaping experiences.

Critically analyzing wellness has a profound influence on my field of study or profession, as it fosters a more comprehensive understanding of how human well-being impacts and is impacted by technological and societal advancements. In fields like computer science or project management, wellness considerations can shape how we approach system design, workplace culture, and user experience.

In terms of technology, critically analyzing wellness informs my perspective on the next big topics in the field. Mental health-focused applications, AI-driven wellness tools, and systems designed to detect and mitigate stress or fatigue are emerging areas that blend technological advancement with wellness goals. By understanding the challenges people face, I can contribute to the development of solutions that are empathetic, user-centered, and impactful.

Furthermore, as the digital world increasingly intersects with daily life, the ethical implications of technology on mental and physical wellness are becoming critical topics. From addressing the addictive nature of social media to designing algorithms that prioritize user well-being, studying wellness provides valuable insights into how technology can either harm or enhance health. This awareness ensures I remain attentive to how my work impacts individuals and communities, guiding me toward creating responsible, forward-thinking solutions.

Ultimately, critically analyzing wellness ensures that my work contributes to a more equitable, human-centered future, where technology and societal systems support overall well-being rather than undermining it.