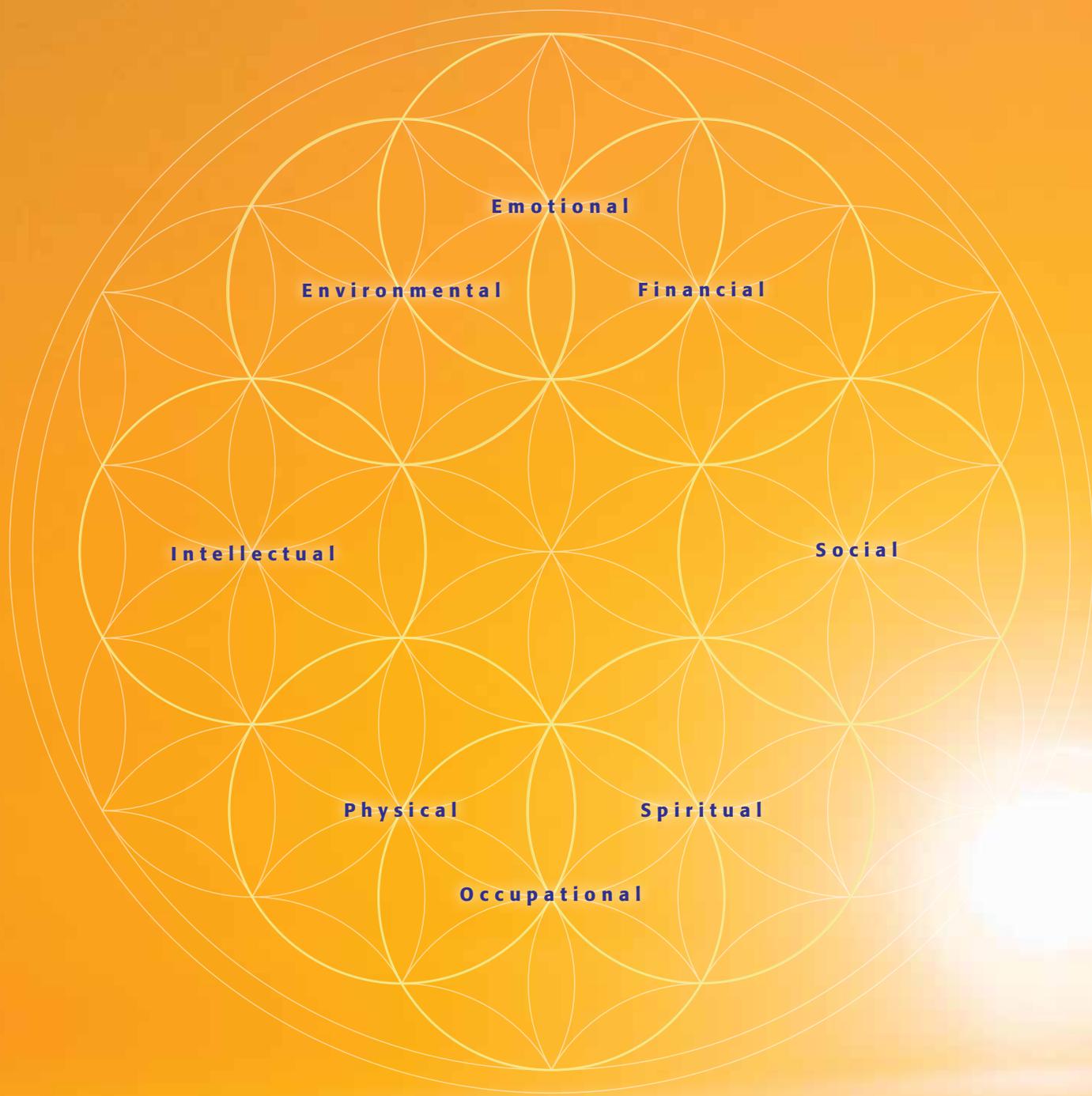


JOURNEY TO

Wellness



Overview

Welcome to your own Journey to Wellness where you will find new ideas to use to begin or continue on your personal journey, no matter where you are in your life. If you have ever experienced chronic stress, addiction, trauma, or another life challenge, you will find examples here that have helped many to pursue and continue a journey to wellness, along with reminders about the importance of doing these simple activities and actions.

Certain patterns of thinking and feeling can fuel unhealthy habits and behaviors. These patterns include insecurity, self-sabotage, and self-criticism, which can lead to neglecting your own health and wellness. Sometimes people let go of the things that help them feel well and strong, like hobbies and creative activities. Sometimes people let go of the people who help them feel well and strong, like friends and family.

**AIM FOR PROGRESS,
NOT PERFECTION.**

The Journey to Wellness will help you create patterns of thinking, feeling, and doing to restore a sense of wellness. Planning to do just a single activity each day will make it more likely that you will complete it.

Remember that you won't always have the energy to take the actions you planned. Some days will be easier than others. Beating yourself up is not helpful. Instead, focus on the action you did take and will take. Remind yourself that tomorrow is a new day.

The journey of 1000 miles begins with a single step.

LAO TZU

Swarbrick, M., DiGioia-Laird, V., Estes, A., Kavalkovich, S., Nemecek, P., Pelland, J., Stewart, B., Treitler, P., Baldomero, J. (2022, February). Journey to Wellness. Piscataway, New Jersey: Center of Alcohol & Substance Use Studies, Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, Rutgers University.

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A PATH TO

Wellness

JOINS KNOWLEDGE WITH ACTION



Wellness involves being aware of and making good choices for ourselves each day. A wellness lifestyle includes the activities we do daily to help us manage stress, feel balanced, and contribute to our own well-being and to the welfare of others.

Wellness activities are helpful for anyone, whether they count recovery in days or years or if they are supporting someone else. It's important to do what works for you; everyone's experiences are different, so what works well for others might not be the right fit for you.

Focus on solutions, not problems. Emphasize positive actions by appreciating what you can do today. It doesn't matter what you did yesterday.

DAILY WELLNESS ACTIVITIES HELP YOU MANAGE STRESS AND BUILD PURPOSE.

You can glance at Journey to Wellness to remind you of activities you can do each day. This will help you remember to connect with others, relax, get good sleep, and do things for yourself and others. The suggestions for daily actions come from practical ideas shared by people in recovery that have helped them start and continue their own wellness journey.

You can reflect on any section of Journey to Wellness whenever you have time. Remember your strengths and gifts. You have the power to strengthen your own wellness over your lifetime.

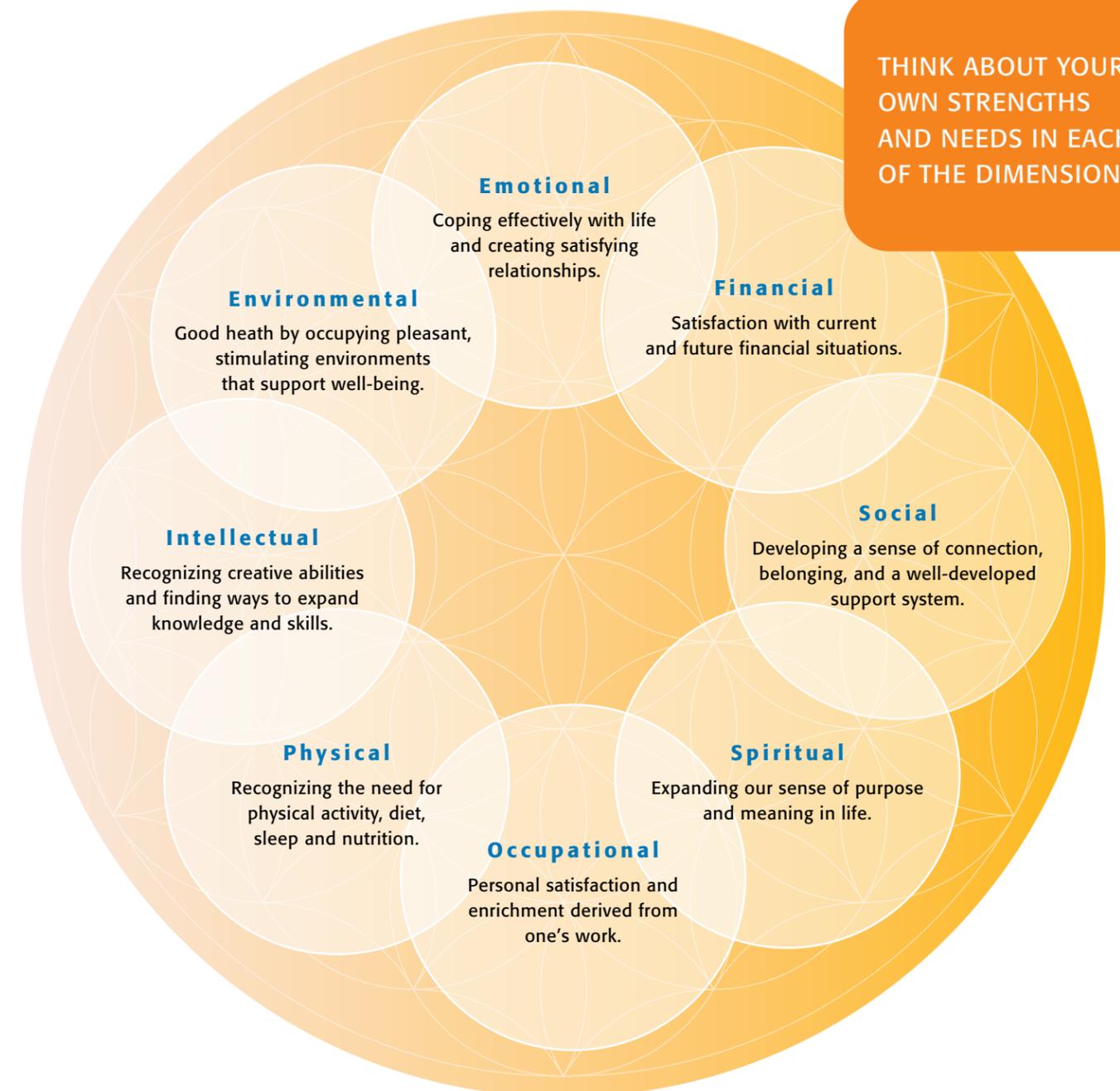
EIGHT DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS

Wellness incorporates the eight dimensions shown in the image below. Each dimension can affect your overall wellness, including how long you live (longevity) and how well you live (quality of life).

The image illustrates the idea that all eight dimensions are inter-connected. Your life roles, such as family member, friend, worker, volunteer, student, colleague, parent, spouse, and community member, require you to plan daily activities, and ignite your wellness passions.

Experiences like stress, trauma, disappointment, and loss can affect your wellness and upset the balance in your life. Focusing on your own wellness dimension needs and strengths help you live each day fully and productively.

THINK ABOUT YOUR OWN STRENGTHS AND NEEDS IN EACH OF THE DIMENSIONS.



Daily Actions

FOR WELLNESS

I will make my **wellness** a priority by taking one **positive** action today.

Wellness involves being aware of and planning simple activities each day. Start by doing what works now or what has worked well for you before.

Why Daily Actions are Important

Daily plans can be motivating and inspire commitment to your own wellness. A plan of one or two actions daily provides structure helping you focus and organize your day. Doing even one action can give you a positive target and sense of purpose. This is especially important when things get stressful or if triggers arise.

Many people report that a daily plan is essential for wellness. Making a daily list, by using a worksheet, calendar, or planner to schedule each activity is helpful for getting unstuck when you feel unmotivated or depressed. Many have said a written commitment or list is helpful because you can take time at the end of the day to cross things off, reschedule, or revise your priorities.

Limiting yourself to one or two actions each day is doable. It is good to keep busy and be productive, but it's also important not to over-commit or over-promise.

Over time, these simple daily actions for your wellness will become healthy habits. Before you know it, wellness activities will define your daily routines.

I will do **something** today that my future self will thank me for.

Daily actions means that you plan and then do. The more specific your plan, the more likely you will follow through and DO!

Daily actions can include a variety of wellness activities. Choose activities that make you feel good or accomplished. Choose activities that will boost your mood. Plan activities that directly and indirectly benefit you and people around you.



EVEN IF YOU'RE HAVING A HARD DAY AND FEELING UNMOTIVATED, TRY TO COMPLETE JUST ONE DAILY ACTION. AFTER YOU COMPLETE YOUR DAILY ACTION, APPRECIATE YOURSELF FOR FOLLOWING THROUGH!

THE FOUR DAILY ACTIONS

In this guide you will find examples of action ideas that have already helped others. These ideas are summarized in four categories:



Connect



Unplug



Sleep



Do Good

Connect

TO CONNECT IS TO JOIN TOGETHER.



I will
connect
with one person
who supports my
wellness

You can connect with people in many ways such as conversation, sharing common interests, or just sitting quietly together.

The quality of the connection matters. Disconnect from things and relationships that do not serve you. Stay connected with people you care about and people who care about you. Build connections with positive uplifting people.



Why Connecting is Important

Connection provides support and motivation. The right people can help shift you towards more positive feelings, while other, less supportive people can trigger difficult emotions. Providing and receiving empathy, encouragement, and validation are very important for emotional wellness.

People help one another. You connect by being emotionally available for others and by reaching out when you need someone to be available for you. You may find support through a friend, family member, or another like-minded individual.

YOU CAN CONNECT BY TALKING TO A FRIEND, NEIGHBOR, OR CO-WORKER, BY SMILING AT A STRANGER, OR THROUGH A HEART-TO-HEART CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT.

Here are some ideas:

- Give or receive support.
- Check in with a friend, family member, neighbor, co-worker, or classmate—anyone who will not stand in the way of your recovery.
- Put away the phone and be present when you're with someone in person.
- Share an inspirational message.
- Get out and be around people, even if they're not your friends or family.
- Use virtual connections. Online meetings, classes, chat forums, apps, are just a few examples.
- If you're not in the mood to talk, simply texting a couple of people can be helpful. Send a meme or just say hello. Maybe even send an old-fashioned letter! It's still great to stay in touch.

The most important things in life are the connections you make with others.

Unplug

MAKE TIME IN YOUR DAY TO UNPLUG.

I will
pause
in the moment to
breathe in,
breathe
out

This means taking a small break, even a minute or less, to relax. Literally unplug from technology, activities, or whatever is happening around you. Taking a few moments for a few deep breaths, closing your eyes or looking out a window can help you disconnect if stress is building.



Why Unplugging is Important

Unplugging can clear your mind to de-stress. This can help you be more aware of your surroundings, making you more in touch with your needs and feelings.

Taking a few minutes to unplug can really help you disconnect from your stress or remove an obstacle or blockage. It can be grounding and calming when you feel overwhelmed or anxious. Unplugging even for just a short time can help you refocus.

SOME PEOPLE LIKE TO USE THE IDEA OF THE ACRONYM RAIN:

Recognize what's going on

Allow the experience to be there just as it is

Investigate with kindness

Nurture with self-compassion and Natural awareness

Here are some strategies you can use:

- Pause what you are doing and tune in to your body and breath.
- Notice where you are.
- Take a deep breath. It is calming, and the extra dose of oxygen increases your brain's thinking ability.
- Meditation might include a daily reading for reflection and inspiration or a guided meditation. Doing this when you wake up starts the day on a positive note.
- Give yourself permission to have fun.
- Go skating, biking, or take a walk outside (with or without a dog).
- Take a power nap.
- Sit outside in a place you like.

Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.

ANNE LAMOTT

Sleep

SLEEP IS A NATURAL STATE OF REST FOR THE MIND AND BODY

I will do
one thing
to help me get
good quality
sleep

Getting enough quality sleep (7-9 hours each night) refreshes your mind and mood and helps your body heal. Sleep is extremely important, but unfortunately, many things can get in the way of a good night's sleep.



SLEEP HABITS AND THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT CAN HELP YOU GET A RESTFUL SLEEP.

Here are some ideas that can help.

- Commit to making sleep a priority.
- Go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day.
- Be careful not to get too much sleep.
- Plan a consistent daily routine, to help relieve stress during the day.
- Avoid TV, cell phone, and other electronics before sleep, as they give out “blue light” that can disrupt your sleep cycle.
- Move electronics out of the bedroom or turn them off at least a half-hour before you go to sleep.
- A dark cool space can help—try blackout curtains or a sleep mask.
- Try sleep meditations, ambient sounds like rain or waves, or calming music when falling asleep.
- Although power naps can be a good way to unplug, avoid long naps during the day,

Why Sleep is Important

Sleep is important for memory and learning. Sleep can help your immune system, heart, and self-control. When you get a good night's sleep you can manage your emotions, think clearly and logically, and make reasonable decisions.

Sleep is an important priority for good health, though many people find it difficult to get a restful sleep. Sleep challenges are common and can lead to many problems. Poor sleep, or interrupted sleep, can lead to physical, social, emotional, and even financial problems.

I cherish my relationship with sleep.

Do Good

FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS



I will do something for
for someone
without expecting
anything
in return

Do good without advertising what you are doing. No one will even notice that you picked up a piece of trash on the street or straightened up a messy space, but it will make you feel a sense of accomplishment. Be selfless instead of selfish.

Detach yourself from the outcomes—do good for its own sake, not because you expect to be paid back.

You can do good for people you know, for strangers, and for yourself.



Doing good is reaching out, giving back, and sharing kindness with others and the rest of the world. Make a commitment every day to do something good for others, which in turn also helps you.

Why Doing Good is Important

Doing good can have a huge impact on your emotional, physical, social, intellectual, environmental, financial, occupational, and spiritual wellness. For many, doing good makes them feel better about themselves because they contributed to making the world a better place. Doing good can help you reduce isolation for yourself or others. It helps to keep things in perspective.

Doing good is contagious. The more you do for others, the more you do for yourself. When you do good, that kindness often comes back to you and people around you.

SMALL ACTS OF KINDNESS FOR SELF:

- Take a moment to think of what you appreciate and what makes you feel grateful. Share your gratitude with someone else.
- Create your own music and allow yourself to listen.
- Humble yourself.
- Smile, even if you are alone.
- Be you and only you.
- Remember that doing good for others also is doing good for you.
- Be kinder to yourself than you think you should be.

SMALL ACTS OF KINDNESS FOR OTHERS:

- Give a compliment.
- Do something needed without being asked.
- Thank someone for something they did for you.
- Clean up after someone else.
- Buy a coffee for someone.
- Hold the door open.
- Let someone cut in front of you in line at the store or in traffic.
- Cook for someone.
- Do something good for the environment.
- Engage in a cause you care about.
- Share your experience, strength, and hope.

Do a little bit of good. It is those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.

DESMOND TUTU

DAILY Actions

Creating wellness involves focusing on a few simple steps each day. You can choose one or two daily actions. When you find one that works, consider ways to do it more often so it becomes a consistent wellness activity. In the spaces below, you may like to write down which daily actions work best for you as a reminder.



Connect



Unplug



Sleep



Do Good

There are only two days in the year when nothing can be done. One is called yesterday and other is called tomorrow, so today is the right day to love, believe, do, and mostly live.

-DALAI LAMA

To download a copy of Journey to Wellness, visit: alcoholstudies.rutgers.edu/wellness. On the same website, you will find supplemental materials and resource links.

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