



SO*fit*

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS
WASHINGTON**



Curriculum Content

WELCOME!

Welcome to SOfit, and thank you for taking steps not only to help others live happier, healthier lives, but also to invest in your own wellness. Wellness is a personal, intimate process and should be approached with patience, resolve and understanding. The decision to put time into wellness is for ourselves and for our loved ones. Truly it is a responsibility to take care of our health, but that doesn't mean it has to be done alone.

A few key things to keep in mind:

Remember, change doesn't happen overnight. Habits take time to create, and therefore take time to recreate and replace. Wellness should be approached as a journey, and we take small steps along that path every day. Goals must be attainable to be met.

Every day is different. What is easy one day may be challenging the next. Experiencing stress about wellness can be counterproductive and can negatively affect progress. Results will vary so keep long-term goals in mind, and don't become discouraged.

Wellness is a holistic view of health, encompassing all four of the identified pillars of wellness in SOfit – Physical, Emotional, Social and Nutritional. These pillars, or sections, of wellness work together; there's more to being healthy than exercise and eating well. When one aspect is lacking in daily life, the others will be impacted.

Wellness is a massive, broad topic, but it can be simple to make positive changes within our lives. One part should be worked on at a time. When a participant feels in control of that part of his or her wellness, having made good progress, repeat with another part. This is how healthy habits are formed for individuals, and quality of life improves.

Thank you for bringing the message of health and wellness to your group. You are positively impacting many lives as a leader of the SOfit program!



EMOTIONAL WELLNESS.....4
Emotional Wellness Activities.....17

NUTRITIONAL WELLNESS.....39
Nutritional Wellness Activities.....53

PHYSICAL WELLNESS.....78
Physical Wellness Activities.....92

SOCIAL WELLNESS.....113
Social Wellness Activities.....131

EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

In this pillar, **EMOTIONAL WELLNESS** will be discussed in combination with mental wellness. Emotional wellness has to do with our feelings and emotions. Emotions are reactions we have to things that happen around us, and we use “feeling” words to describe them. Because the events we react to are constantly changing, it’s natural that our emotions change too.

Mental wellness has to do with our thoughts and choices. Examples of mental wellness include being able to see new ways of doing things, facing challenges in a positive way, being patient with yourself, taking action to reach goals, keeping promises, making healthful choices, and taking responsibility for actions.

When we’re emotionally and mentally stable, we’re able to think more clearly and manage our stress in a healthy way.

In the Emotional Wellness pillar, we’ll learn about stress management and explore different ways to express our emotions in a healthy way, without hurting ourselves or other people. We’ll also work to improve how we feel about ourselves.

LESSONS IN EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Healthy Expression of Emotions
Stress Management
Mindfulness: The Art of Being Present
Relaxation and Breathing Techniques
Goal Setting
Decision-Making
Healthy Self-Esteem

Healthy Relationships

Healthy relationships are fun and make you feel good about yourself. These relationships can be with anyone in your life – family members, friends and the people you date.

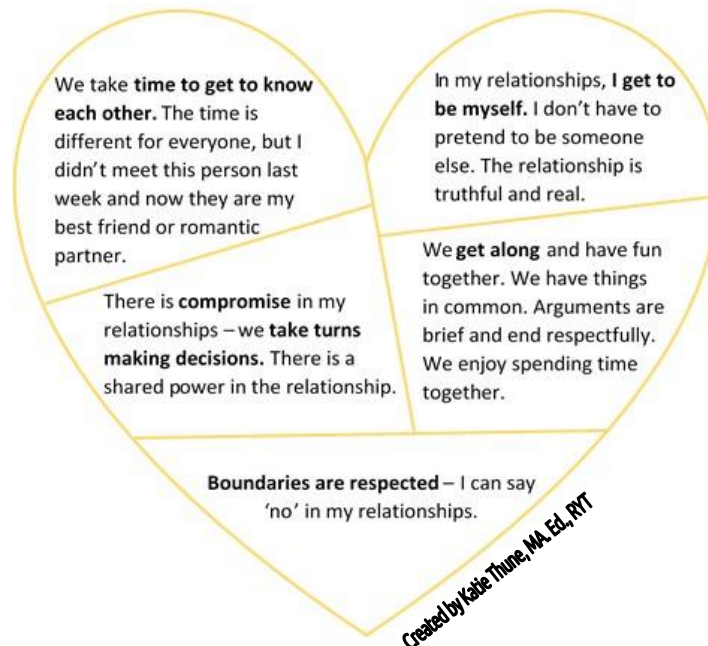
Unhealthy relationships are not fun and might make you feel bad about yourself. These relationships can be with anyone in your life – family members, friends and the people you date.

Examples of healthy behaviors in a relationship include: taking turns making decisions, respecting each other, saying nice things to each other, sharing personal thoughts and feelings even if you disagree.

Examples of unhealthy behaviors in a relationship include: saying put downs, telling you how to act or what to wear, getting mad when you are with other people, pushing you to do things you don't want to do, making all the choices, wanting you to keep secrets.

The Heart of Relationships:

The following are the five pieces of the Heart of Relationships:



When spending time with someone, it's important to not only have fun with them but to also learn about each other and develop your relationship with them. By finding activities or interests that you both share, you can spend a good time together and also learn about the things you both like! To enhance your time together, find something to do that you both enjoy! On the next page are examples of activities that you can have fun with and still get to know each other better.



Stress Management

Stress is our reaction to emotional, physical, or environmental pressures, usually caused by events or thoughts that make you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. Stress can take its toll on our body and brain, so it's important to make sure we learn how to control and improve the levels of stress in our lives.

Mental Stress:

When we become stressed, the chemicals in our brain become unbalanced. Our brains can get tired and it is challenging to stay mentally strong. Some of these symptoms include becoming easily moody, feeling overwhelmed, having difficulty relaxing, or avoiding others.



Physical Stress:

Since stress occurs in the brain, and our brains control our body, there are also negative effects physically. When you're stressed, it's hard to "turn your brain off" and get a good night's sleep.

Sometimes, stress can also have an effect on our daily diets. Stress can make us want to eat a lot or a little, but it's important to try and maintain our normal, healthy lifestyles. When we're stressed, we sometimes think the best way to feel better is to eat something comforting. Examples include: candy, chips or soda. We think these foods will help us feel better, but in reality they won't help us in the long run because they aren't giving our body the nutrients it needs. Did you know that when you're stressed, your body retains more calories as fat? This is because your body biologically knows something is wrong and is preparing itself for scarcity.

Also, when we're stressed our immune system is negatively affected. This means it's easier for us to get sick because our body isn't strong enough to fight off the germs that are trying to infect us, and takes longer to recover from injury and illness.



How to Combat Stress:

Be Active

Stress is hard to deal with, and unfortunately, it's something that we deal with almost every day. It's important to learn how to manage stress and try to limit negative effects on our bodies. A great way to combat stress is exercise. When we exercise, our brains release good chemicals that can help overcome the bad ones caused by stress. Exercise helps bring in good thoughts and kick out the bad ones, all while getting more fit! So, it's always a good idea to get active when you're feeling stressed to help your brain and body feel better.

Be Organized

If you feel like your brain is too full and causing you to feel stressed, being more organized can help keep yourself in check. Try writing things that you have to do in a planner or keeping folders on your desk with your important papers in it. By laying out all the stuff you have to get done, it's easier to plan ahead and mentally prepare for what you have to do. By setting goals and achieving them, it's easier to level out your stress.

Learn to Say "No"

One of the most important things in controlling stress is knowing when to say enough is enough! Sometimes, it's hard to say no to others, but you need to make sure to take care of yourself first. If you've had a long day, don't be afraid to just take some time for yourself. Watch a movie to calm down, take a long bath to relax or read a book in bed. Making sure to take time by yourself is a great way to de-stress and re-energize for another day. Knowing how much you can handle is important for knowing your appropriate stress level and when you should take a step back.

Stress is hard to deal with, but it's something we all experience! Taking a moment to evaluate your mental and physical health is important to know how to go about handling stress. Don't be embarrassed or afraid to do what is best for you (because only you know how to handle your own stress level. Take a deep breath, stand up tall, and show stress who's the real boss!



Effects of Stress on Personality

Put in the same situation, one person may become very stressed from the events at hand, another may be very relaxed and another may thrive in the excitement and energy. The way you handle a situation is in part due to what type of personality you have and how you perceive a situation. In addition to your personality type, it has been shown that higher levels of estrogen in females make them more prone to adverse effects of stress such as depression or anxiety. But, let's focus on personality types! What personality type are you? Let's see if the type of personality you think you are matches with how you react to stressful situations.

Personality Types:

Type A – From the personality types lesson, this type of person is assertive and a 'go-getter.' They love a competition! However, if a situation becomes too stressful or causes anxiety for a prolonged period of time, Type A personalities can develop stress-related illness such as anxiety or depression.

Type B – These people are more relaxed and are not as focused on timely issues. These types of people are able to adapt well to various environments and situations, therefore being less stressed than a Type A personality in the same situation and being less prone to illness caused by stress.

Perfectionists – Being a perfectionist can be beneficial because projects and tasks are done in a timely manner and very good! However, much of the time perfectionists create their own stress when trying to make everything perfect.

In general, stressful situations can make people angry or hostile, express aggressive behavior and can cause a drop in productivity or efficiency.

An analysis of various personality types and their reactions to stressful situations do not make any personality or any reaction to certain situations the wrong one. Everyone is unique in their own way and that's what makes diversity in the world. It's smart to know your personality type and how you react to stressful situations so you're able to combat your anxiety or stress and avoid stress-induced illnesses. If you find yourself having prolonged problems with stressful situations, seek help by talking to another individual or try utilizing relaxation breathing techniques (yes, there's a lesson on that!).



Bullying and Cyberbullying

What is bullying? Bullying is any unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. In other words, bullying is any type of aggressive behavior that is continued and places unequal power between two people. For example, if someone is continually telling you that you aren't smart in an angry or forceful tone – that is considered bullying.

Types of Bullying:

Verbal – verbal bullying may include teasing, name-calling, taunting or threatening.

Social – social bullying may include purposefully leaving someone out of a situation, spreading rumors about another person or embarrassing others in a public place.

Physical – physical bullying include tripping or pushing, making mean or rude gestures toward another person, or physically hitting or kicking someone.

Cyberbullying – this type of bullying happens while using electronic devices or technology including cell phones or computers. Examples of cyberbullying include verbal bullying through social media sites, text messages, group chats or other websites. This type of bullying can happen 24/7.

None of these types of bullying is okay to do to someone else in any type of situation. Others may not have the courage to stick up for themselves (respect themselves) and tell you to stop bullying them. Even if you think it's a joking situation, someone could be hurt from one of these types of bullying.



What to do in a Bullying Situation:

Sometimes it's difficult to stand up for yourself when you're the victim of bullying or help someone else when they are being bullied. Here are some tips to think about when you're the victim of a bully or when you see someone else being bullied:

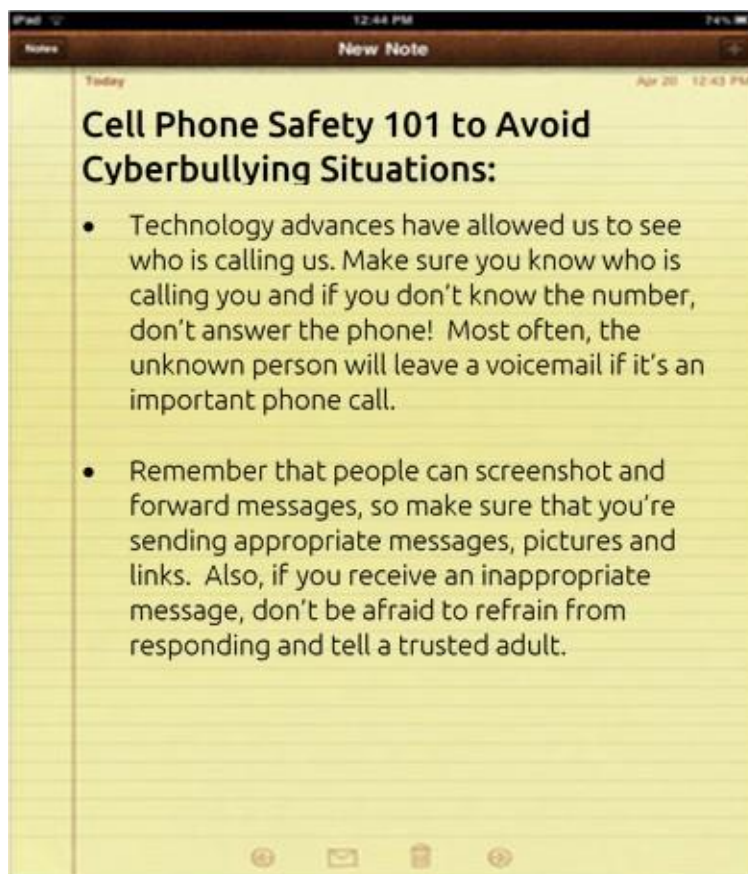
- When you see someone else being bullied, contact another trusted adult or person of authority to help intervene in the situation and resolve the conflict in a positive way (OR use your knowledge of resolving conflict in a positive way to help intervene!)
- Be a model of respectful behavior! If you don't want to be bullied, then don't bully others. If you would want someone to help you if they saw you being bullied, then show others by helping them if they are being bullied.
- Be someone's friend. Sometimes, people just need a friend to look out for them or to confide in.



What to do in a Cyberbully Situation:

Cyberbullying is difficult because most of the time it's only seen between the one who is bullying and the victim of the cyberbullying. So, what should you do if you're the victim of cyberbullying?

- Save the evidence! Since cyberbullying happens behind the scenes and not in front of other people that can witness the bullying, it's important to get the evidence to show a trusted adult or person of authority.
- Be relentless. Reporting the cyberbully one time may not mean that the bullying will stop. It's important to continually report each act of bullying until the person stops.
- Block the cyberbully! A convenient setting about electronic devices and modern technology is the ability to block people on social media, through e-mail or their cell phone number. To stop the bullying from continually happening, blocking the person is an option!
- Being bullied by someone is not your fault! Don't blame yourself for being the victim of bullying or cyberbullying. Instead, try finding activities that you enjoy doing in your leisure time instead of spending time on the Internet or social media sites.



Breathing Exercises To Combat Stress

Stress happens in your everyday life, some more than others, and it is necessary to allow your body to use its natural relaxation response to combat the effects of stressful situations. Relaxation can help decrease your heart rate and blood pressure, relax your muscles and slow your breathing. All of these components help in the healing process from stressful situations. There are many different ways to combat stressors in your life, one including breathing exercises. Find what works best for you and make it a part of your daily routine!

In this lesson, we will go more in depth on breathing meditation to help with stress relief. Here is a general guideline for breathing meditation:

- Sit in a comfortable position where your back is straight and place one hand on your chest and one on your stomach.
- Begin by breathing in through your nose and then out through your mouth.
- Continue this in/out coordination until you feel relaxed

More specific breathing techniques include:

- *“Equal breathing”* – breathing in and out through your nose for four counts each
- *Progressive relaxation* – similar to deep breathing with continued breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth. While doing deep breathing, focus on tensing and relaxing muscle groups starting with your feet and toes and working all the way up to your neck and eyes.
- *Guided visualization* – Go to your happy place! This may seem corny to some people, but to others it really helps reduce stress and replace negative thoughts with positive ones

Stress is a common occurrence for any personality type and it is good to fit in relaxation techniques into your daily routine so that your body is able to stay healthy and energetic. Being more relaxed makes people happier and more productive in their activities or tasks.



Appropriate Expression of Emotions

Emotions are a very complicated topic because they aren't solid objects that can be described from appearance or their physical characteristics. Emotions are feelings someone has in reaction to the environment, activities, or any other stimuli that can alter a person's mood.

The basic emotions that an individual can experience are happiness, fear, anger, and sadness. Have you ever experienced these emotions? Do you remember how your behavior or body language changed because of these emotions? The most effective way at communicating emotions, feelings, or intent is through facial expressions and behavior. Facial expressions and behavior are very important for groups to work together cooperatively because they show others what you are feeling. For example, challenging behavior is often associated with trying to communicate emotions or experiencing emotional distress. Some people may be able to express their emotions better than others. For instance, women are more expressive whereas men are comfortable with being less expressive.

Since emotions are subjective and vary from person to person, the expression of emotions is very important for effective communication. There are some guidelines to keep in mind when expressing your emotions in a work setting. These guidelines can even be applied when you're attending a large event or are in public.

- Express emotions professionally – have control over emotional displays and maintaining a 'business-like' atmosphere
 - For example, smile pleasantly while meeting with someone you may not particularly like.
 - Manage expression of positive emotions so that they aren't expressed during inappropriate times or become excessive.
 - For example, it's okay to joke around with co-workers, but make sure to not joke around for too long where the situation becomes uncomfortable.
- Express emotions to improve situations – manage emotions so they result in positive outcomes or create a good climate in the workplace.
 - If you are having negative emotions such as anger or annoyance, try and think of the positives of the situation and express positive emotions such as happiness.



Making Time for Yourself – “Me” Time

We all get caught up with busy schedules between work, friends, and family that we never take time for ourselves. Even if it's 10 minutes eating breakfast by yourself every morning or taking a Sunday morning every couple weeks, everyone needs “Me” time.

“Me” time is important for you to find yourself. Sometimes people get lost in the hussle and bussle of life and need to take some time to find themselves again. Also, taking time to unwind and restart your brain helps to improve concentration and productivity! You are able to organize and prioritize your thoughts as well as problem solve effectively. Now doesn't 10-15 minutes without any distractions sound wonderful?!

Let's think of some ways to find “Me” time...

- Book it! Pen it in your planner. Even if it's only 5-15 minutes, that's still enough time to unwind your thoughts and regroup.
 - For example, make an effort to wake up 10 minutes earlier to have some “Me” time in the morning before starting your day.
 - Or take a Saturday or Sunday morning to go on a long walk or sit outside with some tea.
- “Gimme 5!” Take 5 minutes at work, home, or school. Breathe and relax. Don't worry about your 'to do' list or where you need to be next. Even 5 minutes to regroup helps!
- Once or twice a month take 30 minutes to an hour for yourself
 - This may include going on a walk, getting your nails done, or watching sports on TV.
- If a friend or family member need your help during your “Me” time, tell them you're busy for 15 minutes and then can help them. Don't be afraid to say 'no' to others or 'in a half hour.'

This time shouldn't be spent doing laundry, catching up on e-mails, or finishing other tasks around the house. Turn off your phone or leave it in the other room and close your door or find a quiet place outside.

Now the final step is to write down your idea of “Me” time and dedicate some time every day or every week for yourself. Don't forget to stick to it! “Me” time is important and it should be a priority in your schedule.



- Expressing positive emotions in difficult situations may encourage others to be more positive as well!
- Express emotions to the right people
 - For example, in a situation where a team worked very hard on a project that was successful, congratulate the whole team instead of just one person.
- Expression of certain emotions is always inappropriate
 - When expressing positive emotions keep in mind to have an appropriate distance between you and the person you are talking to. Some people may misinterpret your expressions if you are too close to them.
 - It's not good to abuse others with negative emotions. It's not a good feeling when others put you down with negative emotions, so don't put others down with your negative emotions.



Self-Esteem

- Self-esteem: a person's overall evaluation of his or her own worth.
 - It answers the question, "How do I feel about who I am?"
 - Not a fixed thing - can change depending on how we think.
 - Overtime, habits of negative thinking can lower our self-esteem and this can become detrimental to our health.
- When you have high/healthy self-esteem, you feel good about yourself and proud of all that you've accomplished.
- When you have low self-esteem, you don't value yourself as much and put little worth into your opinions and ideas. You might worry that you aren't "good enough."
- Take pride in the things you CAN do.

A Few Things That Affect Our Self-Esteem:

- Relationships
- Media messages
- Society
- Disability
- Religion

How to Improve Our Self-Esteem:

- Manage your thoughts. Try to control negative thoughts and think more positively!
- Take pride in your ideas and opinions. You and your thoughts are unique.
- Set goals. Setting and accomplishing goals lets you take pride in what you do.
- Volunteer. Seeing how you can make a difference will make you feel good about yourself.
- Exercise. You can relieve stress and encourage being healthier.
- Relax and have fun! Spend time with people who love you for you and enjoy living life.

Main Idea:

Having positive self-esteem can sometimes be hard, but with a little work and attitude adjustment, it's attainable. Learn to appreciate who you are and all that you can do and healthy self-esteem will come your way. When you value yourself more, you can value all that the world has to offer and make life that much better!





Emotional Wellness Activities

HEALTHY EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS

Key Messages

People have a range of emotions, and this is normal.

I will identify and express my feelings in a healthy way without hurting myself or others.

Background

Emotions are sometimes a complicated topic. That's because emotions aren't concrete objects that people see, touch, or easily describe. Emotions are the feelings people have in reaction to other people, situations, activities, or their environment. People can experience a wide range of emotions. Psychologist Paul Eckman suggested that there are six basic universal human emotions: fear, disgust, anger, surprise, sadness and happiness. In the late 1990s, he expanded this list to include: excitement, embarrassment, contempt, pride, shame, amusement, guilt, relief, contentment and satisfaction. Along the same lines, psychologist Robert Plutchik created what he called the "wheel of emotions." He said that the basic emotions sometimes combine to create yet more, different emotions, similar to the way an artist mixes colors. This model for understanding emotions is more complex, because it demonstrates how the "basic" emotion changes when it's either blended with another emotion or changes in intensity. The model also categorizes emotions as polar opposites. According to Plutchik the "basic" and conflicting emotions are: joy versus sadness; anger versus fear; trust versus disgust; and surprise versus anticipation. Within and between each category is a range of emotions.

While it's normal to experience all of these emotions, the way people express these emotions can impact relationships with others or ourselves. Unhealthy expressions of emotion can harm a relationship, sometimes mildly and sometimes severely. On the other hand, healthy expression of emotions can help bond a relationship and make it stronger. It's important in emotional health to express emotions, because expressing emotions appropriately can solve problems, ease relationship tensions, and even make life a little lighter and easier. Often, when emotions are held on to, life becomes more complicated. Small problems may turn into big problems. Some of the ways people express emotions include:

- **Words**
- **Actions**
- **Facial expressions**
- **Body language**
- **Tone of voice**
- **Crying or laughing**

While people express emotions in many ways, it's most important to understand that how we express those emotions has the greatest impact. The purpose of expressing emotions is to be honest and open. The point is not to hurt or shame others. Here are a few ways people can express their emotions in a healthy way:

- **Body language and facial expressions.** People respond to body language and facial expressions in different ways. When expressing emotions, think about your body language and the expression on your face.
- **Breathing patterns.** Use deep breathing techniques to help calm yourself when expressing emotions.
- **Use "I feel..." phrases instead of "you make me feel" statements.** Saying "I feel..." takes ownership of the emotions being experienced. When the listener hears "you make me feel," he or she has a hard time hearing what the speaker has to say. The perception is accusation, rather than being there for someone who's hurting.

It's okay to have a variety of emotions. The important thing is to learn how to express those emotions in a healthy way, without hurting yourself or the people around you.

HEALTHY EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: EXPLORING FEELINGS*

TIME

15-20 minutes

MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper
Markers**

Activity Description

- Brainstorm a list of feelings with the group and write them on the whiteboard or poster paper.
- Ask a volunteer to come to the front and act out one of the feeling words listed on the board. Give the group three guesses. If the group hasn't guessed correctly after three tries, have the actor reveal the feeling.
- Allow others to take turns acting out the feeling words listed on the board.
- Discuss how different feelings can look the same. For example, it can be hard to tell the difference between loneliness and tiredness.
- Ask the group how to find out what a person is feeling - and the danger of assuming you know what someone else feels.

Coach's Notes

Optional to discuss ways of care for yourself when certain feelings emerge. What do you do to take care of loneliness? Or fear? Or some other feeling? This can be done as a large group or with partners.

* Activity adapted from Yoga Calm for Children, www.yogacalm.org and used with permission.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Key Messages

Stress is my body's response to events happening around me and is an everyday experience felt by all people at all ages.

I can find positive ways to manage my stress.

Background

Stress is the body's reaction to emotional, physical and environmental pressures. These pressures can be caused by events, feelings, or situations that make a person feel tense, nervous, anxious, angry or frustrated. Even minor frustrations can turn into stress if not handled in a healthy way. Additionally, stress compounds upon stress and builds up to create long-lasting impacts on the brain and the body if not controlled or resolved in a healthy way.

Effects of Stress

Stress creates an imbalance of the chemicals in the brain. As a response, the brain releases or prohibits certain hormones and different chemicals that cause people to think, act, and feel differently. Stress can cause us to have **mental stresses** (brain fog, fatigue, moodiness, easily angered or saddened, difficulty interacting with others, anxiety) and **physical stresses** (difficulty sleeping, weight gain, lowered immune function, tense muscles or aches, upset stomach), as well as many other problems. Stressors are the sources of stress. They are common events such as being late for an activity, competing in a sporting event, or losing a friend. Stress and stressors are a normal part of life and, unfortunately, unavoidable. The way people deal with stress is what determines the effect the stress has on the body and the mind.

Combating Stress

Because stress is part of everyday life, combating it sounds challenging to most people, but there are ways to combat stress that appeal to everyone.

Be active. Stressors happen every day. A great way to combat both the physical and emotional effects of stress is through exercise. Exercise can release endorphins, which are chemicals in our brains that make us feel good about ourselves. Exercise increases mood and gets the body moving, which both counteract the negative effects of stress. Running, bike riding, hiking and yoga are particularly good exercises when trying to relieve stress.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Eat well. It's important to eat nutritionally dense foods when stressed. It's easy to emotionally eat and eat "comfort foods" when stressed, but eating nutritionally dense foods can combat stress. Some good foods to eat when feeling stressed are: asparagus, avocados, berries, cashews and walnuts, garlic, chamomile and green tea, citrus fruits, oatmeal, and even chocolate. These foods are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, which have positive impacts on the brain when experiencing stress.

Create self-care time in your day. When feeling stressed about the many different moving pieces in life, it's important to take some time for yourself in the day. Watching a movie, taking a bath or shower, reading a book, listening to music, cooking a good meal, or simply spending time alone can be rewarding and combat the stress of constantly being with others. In order to do one thing every day to take care of yourself, you might need to schedule the time, but it doesn't need to take more than 5-10 minutes.

Practice mindfulness and relaxation techniques. Mindfulness itself can reduce the impact of stress and even prevent situations from becoming stressful in the first place. An added technique to mindfulness is relaxation. Useful relaxation techniques are different for everyone and may include simple stretches, visualization, walking, yoga or meditation. Additionally, practicing deep breathing techniques during a stressful situation can immediately counteract the effects in the moment.

Get organized. Organization can help combat stress by adding predictability to the day. When people feel stress they are more likely to forget or lose things, which can add even more stress. Keeping a calendar, planner, and folders with important information or documents can help to decrease stress by creating predictability. Planning ahead and mentally preparing for what comes next in the day, week, or month is much easier when organized.

Spend time in nature. The natural world is extremely healing, and the benefits of spending time in nature have been proven. Even if you simply sit in a park or open green space for a few minutes, time in nature (without a cellphone or other electronics) can be therapeutic and healing. The brain and body respond very positively to nature, and spending time in nature can release similar chemicals to exercising or deep-breathing. Scheduling your self-care time in nature is a great way to make sure it happens from time to time.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: SELF-CARE

TIME

5-10 minutes

MATERIALS

Copies of self-care calendar for all participants
Pen/pencil
Whiteboard or poster paper
Markers

Activity Description

- Explain to participants that being stressed out can make us really moody. No matter what is causing the stress, it's important that we take care of ourselves.
- Give all participants a copy of the self-care calendar. Explain that their job for self-care is to choose one activity every day for themselves. They can keep track of what they do each day on the calendar.
- Brainstorm ideas for activities that participants can do to take care of themselves and make a list on the whiteboard or poster paper. Examples may include: *Stop and breathe for a few minutes, listen to music, drink a cup of tea, go for a walk, stretch, talk to a friend, dance, write in a journal, draw or color.*

Coach's Notes

It may be helpful to check in on this activity with participants from week to week. Allow them to share with the group what they have been doing to take care of themselves.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: SELF-CARE CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

MINDFULNESS: THE ART OF BEING PRESENT

Key Messages

Mindfulness is paying attention. This includes paying attention to how I'm breathing, how I'm moving, how I'm eating, how I'm living.

I can slow down and pay attention to my thoughts, feelings, and surroundings.

Background

Mindfulness is the deep awareness of thoughts, feelings, and the surrounding environment at the present moment. This means paying close attention to things as they are experienced. Mindfulness is often the key to enjoying the sweetest moments in life as well as dealing appropriately with the moments that are challenging or stressful. Using mindfulness in everyday life can have many positive impacts on our well-being as well as on relationships with others.

Mindfulness has been proven to have a myriad of positive impacts on both emotional and physical well-being. Some examples include:

- Better focus in situations riddled with environmental or psychological distractions, such as a loud workplace or thoughts about something other than the task at hand.
- Healthier immune system to fight off illness and infection. Less stress means having a better immune system. Mindfulness not only helps to de-stress mentally, but also allows deep rest and relaxation to occur. This helps sleep, which has always been known to boost the immune system. Mindfulness can also help us pay attention to what we're eating, and nutritional wellness plays a key role in the health of the immune system.
- Better control over emotions and more compassion towards others. Mindfulness allows us to more easily find compassion towards ourselves and others, even in challenging situations, because it teaches us to have more control over our emotions. Mindfulness can help us take a new, clearer approach to a conflict or stressful situation, opening the door for compassion. Being present also allows us to acknowledge our emotions, take ownership over them, and then find solutions more quickly and easily. When people are in a more relaxed state, they can think more clearly. Mindfulness teaches us to be intentional and allows us to reap the added benefit of feeling more relaxed naturally.
- Relieving stress or pressure. Deep breathing, relaxation, and more control over thoughts and emotions lead to relief from stress. Stressful situations will still arise, but with mindfulness it's possible to handle those stressful situations a little more easily, relieving some of the stress.

A few simple ways to incorporate mindfulness into everyday life include:

- Paying attention to breathing. Breath is an indicator to how the body is responding automatically or subconsciously to a situation. If something seems stressful or even exciting, stopping to notice the breath will help to "check-in" with oneself and use brain power to control the physiological response the body is having. If breathing is short and quick, it can be changed using mindfulness.
- Paying attention to the senses sight, sound, smell, touch, taste, and other physical sensations helps us to slow down. Experiences then become either more enjoyable or more manageable. This can also help to maintain patience, for example, while waiting in a line or traffic. Thinking about how exciting and enjoyable the destination is can help to keep thoughts positive, rather than turning to the possible range of negative thoughts in these situations.
- Paying attention to body language, facial expressions, and movement. This helps maintain mindfulness in interactions with others. Paying attention to our own body helps us to pay attention to others in conversation as well. This can ease communication by being fully aware of the many unspoken communications between people in a conversation.

MINDFULNESS: THE ART OF BEING PRESENT

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: BREATHING MEDITATION

TIME

5-10 minutes

MATERIALS

**Quiet music
Yoga mats or chairs**

Activity Description

- Allow participants to lie down on mats or sit comfortably in chairs. Have quiet music playing.
- Read the script slowly, pausing to allow participants to focus on their breath.
- *Sit or lie comfortably with your eyes closed or just look down softly. Take a few deep breaths and let yourself settle in. Feel yourself letting go of any tension you are holding in your body. Let your muscles relax and your breathing slow.*
- *As you listen to the music, focus on your breath for several minutes. Inhale...exhale. Inhale...exhale. **Pause here to allow participants to focus on breath for several minutes.***
- *Begin to deepen your breath and come back to the room. Bring some movement into your body. Wiggle your toes, wiggle your fingers, turn your head side to side. If you are lying down, slowly roll onto one side and make your way up to seated.*
- *Slowly open your eyes. Take a deep breath in and sigh it out. One more breath in and sigh it out.*

Coach's Notes

Another option is to find a relaxation script online or in a book.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WALKING MEDITATION

TIME

5-10 minutes

MATERIALS

Quiet music

Activity Description

- Play quiet music and tell participants that we are going to do a walking meditation. Explain that they will be asked to walk around the space without touching anyone or making any noise. They should be aware of the other people around them so as not to bump into anyone.
- The goal of the walking meditation is to walk slowly and focus on the movement of the body, the breath, and ideally nothing else.

Coach's Notes

Option is to try the walking meditation with a purpose. For example, four steps forward, four steps backward. Or, find a local labyrinth to check out.

RELAXATION AND BREATHING TECHNIQUES

Key Messages

Taking deep breaths can help me to focus and experience less stress.
I can find many different ways to experience relaxation.

Background

There are many benefits to relaxation techniques, but sometimes it's difficult to remember why it's so important to take time to just relax. Some of the benefits of relaxation and breathing techniques include:

- Reduced anger and frustration.
- Less fatigue.
- Slowed heart rate.
- Lowered blood pressure.
- Slowed breathing rate.
- Reduced activity of stress hormones.
- Reduced muscle tension or pain.
- Improved concentration and mood.
- Improved sleep quality.
- Improved digestion.
- Increased blood flow to muscles.
- Maintained blood sugar.

There are many breathing and relaxation techniques. You can try them all to find one that works for you. Here are some great techniques that anyone can do:

- **Massage.** Through massage, we can gain a host of medical and emotional benefits by releasing the chemicals from stress that muscles hold onto.
- **Music and Art Therapy.** Music and art both help a person release emotions and stress and can be deeply relaxing. Certain music can be played to trigger "good" hormones in the brain that replace the negative hormones.
- **Aromatherapy.** Certain scents can bring about positive memories, and some scents can even trigger a hormone shift in the brain. Lavender, sage, patchouli, and frankincense, as well as many other scents, have positive impacts on the chemicals in the brain.
- **Yoga or Tai Chi.** As mentioned previously, being active can help to calm stress. These two types of exercise are centuries old and have been used by many different cultures specifically to relax the mind.
- **Meditation and Guided Relaxation.** Meditation or guided relaxations can help to restore peaceful and positive images to the imagination and mind, giving a sense of peace, comfort and security. They require intentional and positive thoughts, as a way of rewiring the chemicals that come through stress.
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation.** Progressive muscle relaxations have the effect, in some ways, of both a massage and a guided relaxation. Much like the brain, other muscles hold stress as well, and a progressive muscle relaxation can help to release those chemicals. This is done by tightening different muscle groups, holding for several seconds, and then releasing.
- **Visualization.** Visualization is making a picture in your mind of positive places, hopes, and dreams. In visualization, we might envision ourselves on a beach, in our dream home, or succeeding at something really challenging. Sending positive images to the imagination can alter our future line of thought and block stress from becoming overwhelming in the first place.
- **Deep Breathing.** Much like exercise, deep breathing, or "belly breathing," has a physiological response that alters the chemicals in our brain. Deep breathing helps to lower the heart rate, which lowers the risk of going into a stress response. The impacts on the heart rate and brain can be felt instantly through deep breathing. It's important to make sure that the breath is in the diaphragm and not the chest.

RELAXATION AND BREATHING TECHNIQUES

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: VOLCANO BREATH*

TIME

2-5 minutes

MATERIALS

Optional - quiet music

Activity Description

- Sit in a chair, cross-legged on the floor, or stand with feet hip-width apart.
- Place palms together at the heart.
- Take a slow, deep breath through the nose and pause when the lungs are full.
- Hold the pause and bring the arms up over the head.
- Exhale and slowly breathe out, moving arms out to the side and then back together at the heart.

Coach's Notes

Not all participants will be able to breathe in through the nose and that's okay. Option is to think of someone you would like to send your thoughts to. Picture that person in your mind and send out thoughts to them in Volcano Breath. Allow individuals to share who they sent their thoughts to. Another option is to think of something they would like to bring into their life. As they exhale, they can shower this image around them. Examples include strength, joy, calm, and more.

* Activity adapted from Yoga Calm for Children, www.yogacalm.org and used with permission.

RELAXATION AND BREATHING TECHNIQUES

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION

TIME

10-15 minutes

MATERIALS

Optional - quiet music
Optional - yoga mats or blankets

Activity Description

- Allow participants to lie down on yoga mats or sit comfortably in chairs. Have quiet music playing.
- Read the script slowly, pausing to allow participants to relax.

*Sit or lie comfortably with your eyes closed or just look down softly. Take a few deep breaths and let yourself settle in. Let your muscles relax and your breathing slow. **Pause for a few moments.***

During this relaxation you will be asked to gently tense or squeeze various muscles throughout your body.

*Let your hands rest loosely in your lap, or by your side. Begin to become aware of your breathing, noticing how your abdomen (belly) rises and falls with each breath. Now take a long slow deep breath in through your nose, all the way down into your stomach, and let it out slowly. Continue to breathe deeply. **Pause here to allow participants to take a few deep breaths.***

*Now let your breathing rhythm return to normal...and relax....**Pause.***

*Bring your awareness to your feet and toes. Breathe in deeply through your nose, and as you do, gradually curl your toes down and tense the muscles in the soles of your feet. **(Pause briefly.)** Now release the muscles in your feet as you breathe out. Feel the tension in your feet wash away as you exhale. Notice how different your feet feel when they are tensed and when they are relaxed.*

Now bring your awareness to your calf muscles and lower leg muscles. As you draw in a deep breath, flex your toes up towards your knees and tighten the muscles in your lower legs. Let those muscles release as you exhale.

*Now, draw your attention to your thighs and upper leg muscles. Take a deep breath in, and tense the muscles in your thighs. **(Pause.)** Now release as you exhale. As you do this, you may notice a warm tingling sensation. Enjoy this feeling of relaxation in your thighs.*

*Draw in a deep breath and gradually tighten the muscles in your buttocks. **(Pause.)** Release your breath and the muscles. Feel the tension leaving your muscles and relaxing completely.*

*Bring your awareness to your stomach. Draw in a deep breath and tighten these muscles. Imagine you are trying to touch your belly button to your spine. **(Pause.)** Now release your breath and let your muscles relax.*

*Bring your awareness to the muscles in your back. As you slowly breathe in, arch your back slightly and tighten these muscles. **(Pause.)** Now release your breath and let your muscles relax.*

RELAXATION AND BREATHING TECHNIQUES

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION CONTINUED

Give your attention to your shoulder muscles and the muscles in your neck. As you slowly draw in a nice deep breath, pull your shoulders up towards your ears and squeeze these muscles firmly. (Pause.) Now breathe out completely, and allow your tightened muscles to completely release.

Feel the tension subside as you relax and breathe out. Feel the heaviness in your body. Enjoy this feeling of becoming heavier and heavier. If it feels comfortable, think to yourself, "I am calm. I am at peace."

Now, draw your awareness to your upper arms. As you breathe in, flex your wrists towards your shoulders and tighten the muscles in your upper arms. (Pause.) And now gently release your arms and breathe all the way out.

Bring your awareness to your forearms. As you breathe in, curl your hands inward as though you are trying to touch the inside of your elbows with your fingertips. (Pause.) And feel the tension subside as you relax and breathe out.

Now, take another breath in and tightly clench your fists. (Pause.) And now release. Notice any feelings of buzzing or throbbing. Your hands are becoming very soft and relaxed. Your arms and hands are feeling heavy and relaxed.

Now tighten the muscles in your face by squeezing your eyes shut, clenching your jaw muscles and squeezing your lips together. As you do, breathe in fully. (Pause.) Breathe out and relax all your facial muscles. Feel your face softening.

*You are now completely relaxed from the tips of your toes to the top of your head. Take a few more moments to rest. This time is for you. Relax. Listen to the sound of your breathing and enjoy the lovely, warm sensation of physical relaxation. **Pause for a minute or two to allow participants to relax.***

Begin to deepen your breath and come back to the room. Bring some movement into your body. Wiggle your toes, wiggle your fingers, turn your head side to side. If you are lying down, slowly roll onto one side and make your way up to seated.

Slowly open your eyes. Take a deep breath in and sigh it out. One more breath in and sigh it out. You can carry this feeling of relaxation with you as you continue the day.

When participants have started returning their consciousness to the room, the group can have a short discussion about how that felt and whether they'd like to continue doing that, even on their own. Also discuss when it might be helpful to do an activity like this.

Coach's Notes

A number of guided relaxations and progressive muscle relaxations are available to anyone on the internet as well as in books. There are even some great videos on youtube.com that include relaxing music along with the relaxations.

GOAL SETTING

Key Messages

It's important to set goals in all areas of wellness (physical, nutritional, social, and emotional) as well as other areas in life (work, school, home).

Short-term goals will help me achieve my long-term goals.

Background

A goal describes where you want to get to or what you want to get done. The definition of a goal is: something that you are trying to do or achieve. Setting a goal is like creating a plan to do better, or to get something done. Some goals are easy to reach, while others may be more challenging. When setting goals, it's important to set realistic goals and to consider your strengths and limitations. This may help you achieve your goals within a reasonable time.

When setting a goal, it's helpful to:

- Establish a plan to reach the goal.
- Consider barriers (what could get in the way).
- Suggest solutions to the barriers.
- Identify a reward.
- Evaluate progress.

We can set both long-term and short-term goals. A long-term goal is a goal that you plan to reach over an extended period of time. An example of a long-term goal is becoming a teacher. A short-term goal is a goal that you can achieve in a short time. Short-term goals can contribute to the long-term goal. Short-term goals that contribute towards becoming a teacher may include getting a job tutoring or applying to a teaching program at a university. Barriers to consider for the long-term goal of becoming a teacher might include not getting into the university or not having enough money to pay for the classes at the university.

Goal setting is a powerful tool that you can use to shape your future. Goals help us focus and can give us a sense of purpose. Goals can also boost our self-confidence, and this strengthens our mental and emotional wellness.



GOAL SETTING

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: MY GOALS FOR BETTER HEALTH*

TIME

30-40 minutes

MATERIALS

- Copies of “My Goals for Better Health” worksheet for all participants
- Pen/pencil
- Whiteboard or poster paper
- Markers

Activity Description

Tell participants they’ll be setting goals for themselves in four different areas of their life right now. Explain each of the areas:

- *Social* has to do with family or friends.
- *School or work* has to do with school or work.
- *Physical* has to do with nutrition or exercise - anything to do with the body.
- Emotional has to do with feelings, emotions, or thinking.
- Explain that we’ll also think about the people who support us in achieving our goals.

For each area, have the group brainstorm ideas for goals in that area and write the ideas on the whiteboard or poster paper. Then allow partners to think about specific goals in each of the areas and write it in the box on the worksheet.

Examples of goals in each of the areas:

- *Social Goal:* Meet someone new, eat lunch with a different person once a week, call a friend every weekend
- *School or Work Goal:* Be on time every day, try not to complain, take a deep breath when frustrated or mad
- *Physical Goal:* Drink five glasses of water a day, eat five fruits/vegetables every day, take the stairs instead of the elevator, exercise thirty minutes each day
- *Emotional Goal:* Use positive self-talk (“I can do it,” “I can be responsible”), write in a journal every day, do one thing each day to take care of myself

Explain to participants that we don’t need to try and reach our goals on our own. We have people in our lives who can help and support us in reaching our goals. Sometimes it even helps us to reach our goals faster when we have support. Brainstorm with the group about people who can support them in reaching their goals. Make a list on the whiteboard. In partners, have them write the specific names of people in the box “People who support me” on the worksheet.

Coach’s Notes

After the worksheet is complete, it could be fun for participants to come into a strong pose and picture themselves reaching that goal. This lesson could be done in combination with the “Volcano Breath” activity from the lesson on Relaxation and Breathing Techniques, picturing themselves reaching their goal in volcano breath.

* Activity adapted from The Power of Me, Mad Hatter Wellness, www.madhatterwellness.com and used with permission.

GOAL SETTING

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: MY GOALS FOR BETTER HEALTH*

MY GOALS FOR BETTER HEALTH

SCHOOL OR WORK GOAL :

EMOTIONAL GOAL (FEELINGS, EMOTIONS, THINKING):

PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT ME :

SOCIAL GOAL (FAMILY, FRIENDS) :

PHYSICAL GOAL (NUTRITION, EXERCISE):

* Activity adapted from The Power of Me, Mad Hatter Wellness, www.madhatterwellness.com and used with permission.

DECISION-MAKING

Key Messages

I can make decisions in my life to lead to a healthier lifestyle.

If I'm making an important decision, I will think about what I want and what my options might be before making the decision.

Background

We make decisions every day. Some decisions are small choices such as deciding what to wear or what to eat for breakfast. Other decisions are larger choices and may be life changing or affect other people in our lives, such as whether or not to get in a car with someone who has been drinking alcohol or how to respond to hurtful comments made by a friend.

Several decision-making models are available that are helpful in supporting a person when making a decision. Those models are typically used when we are making the larger choices rather than small choices such as figuring out what time to set your alarm clock. Whatever decision-making model a person uses, there are some really important concepts to think through. It's important for us to think through the decision and to do the right thing for ourselves. Sometimes we forget that the right choice for one person might not be right for another person. When making decisions, we need to think about ourselves.

We all have different styles of decision-making. Usually we begin by assessing whether something is an important or an unimportant decision. If it's an important decision, we think carefully about what we want and what options we have. Then we weigh possible positive and negative consequences. Thoughtful decision-making gives us more control over our lives and contributes to our health, safety, and sense of well-being.

It's okay to ask for help when thinking through a larger choice that might affect others or could be life changing for ourselves. Talking things through is another helpful step in making important decisions.

DECISION-MAKING

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: CONFLICTING FEELINGS*

TIME

30-40 minutes

MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper
Markers**

Activity Description:

- Ask a volunteer to come to the front of the room. Ask the group to imagine it's a hot day in July and the individual is standing on a steep cliff, looking into a cool river below. A friend has encouraged him or her to jump into the water below. The individual has two conflicting feelings that are speaking very loudly inside his or her body. What are they?
- On the whiteboard or poster paper write each of the two feelings the group identifies side by side. Ask the group what each word is saying to the individual. Then write those responses under each word. For example, if the feeling words are "afraid" and "brave," under "afraid" you might write things like, "You'll die!" or "You'll break a leg!" Under "brave," you might write, "Don't be a wimp!" or "You can do it!" Encourage the group to come up with seven or eight responses for each feeling.
- Now ask for two more volunteers to play the parts of the different voices. Standing on either side of the person about to jump, have each individual read his or her respective feelings from the board. After watching this for a few minutes, ask the group which voice they think the individual should obey.
- Allow the volunteers to sit down, and ask the group if it's possible for the individual to listen to both feelings. Help them come to a solution that honors both feelings. For instance, some solutions to the face-off between feeling both afraid and brave could include jumping from a lower rock after checking the depth of the water; watching others jump and then deciding if it's safe; and asking others for information in order to make a better decision.

Coach's Notes

Try this activity presenting a situation that generates other feelings such as anger and calm, responsibility and playfulness - any pair of feelings that people may struggle with when making a decision. An important part of this activity is to help participants learn that the feelings are not bad. They are warning signals from the body. It may be helpful to ask the group what life would be like if we listened only to one emotion, such as fear, bravery, or any other single feeling. In this way, participants can learn how to listen to, evaluate, and balance competing thoughts and emotions.

* Activity adapted from Yoga Calm for Children, www.yogacalm.org and used with permission.

Healthy Self-Esteem

Key Messages

I can have healthy, positive self-esteem.

Using positive self-talk helps me to feel better about myself. I can do it!

Background

Self-esteem is the image and thoughts we have about ourselves. Positive, or high, self-esteem is the ability to accept, appreciate and be honest about strengths and weaknesses we have. Having high self-esteem can yield many benefits in life. It can lead to a healthy social life and decreased stress. Having negative, or low, self-esteem can lead to many issues, including physical and emotional health problems. The effects of stress caused by low self-esteem can be long-lasting. It can take considerable effort to change low self-esteem into high self-esteem, but it's certainly possible.

Highs and Lows of Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is present and evolving throughout life and can change through new experiences and meeting new people. It is often formed during childhood and the growing-up years, through experiences and feedback from parents, siblings, teachers, coaches and friends. Self-esteem is affected by the way both successes and failures are handled by these external people, as well as other factors.

Low self-esteem is defined by having a negative self-image and a feeling of unworthiness, incompetence, and incapability. It is often an unconscious pattern of behavior and thought. Some negative experiences (especially during childhood) that contribute to low self-esteem are:

- Being ignored, ridiculed, teased or demeaned.
- Being harshly criticized, especially continuously.
- Feeling expectations of perfection. A parent, guardian, teacher, coach or peer may have reacted as though a one-time mistake or failure was a failure of the whole self.
- Experiencing an emotional trauma, such as emotional, physical or sexual abuse.
- Experiencing bullying.
- Experiencing societal pressure to be different or "better."
- Experiencing an unhealthy relationship.

Some positive experiences that contribute to high self-esteem are:

- Being listened to or heard.
- Being spoken to respectfully and compassionately.
- Getting appropriate attention and affection.
- Feeling like expectations are realistic and attainable.
- Feeling like accomplishments are celebrated and recognized, while feeling like failures are acknowledged and accepted as normal.
- Experiencing healthy relationships and encouragement.

Past experiences continue to impact daily life, including self-esteem. Even if an experience feels as if it happened a long time ago, all experiences impact the brain and can impact self-esteem both positively and negatively.

Healthy Self-Esteem

Improving Self-Esteem

Improving self-esteem may sound like a daunting task, but with some work and perseverance, is readily attainable. It may take some time and extra practice, but everyone can improve their self-esteem with patience. Try practicing a few of these techniques:

- **Managing thoughts through mindfulness.** People control their own thoughts. When experiencing a negative thought about oneself, it's okay to say "Stop!" and replace that thought with positive self-talk, such as "I can do this."
- **Taking pride in accomplishments, ideas and opinions.** Each individual is unique, which is what makes the world a wonderful place. Being kind to oneself and accepting differences in self and others can boost self-image.
- **Goal setting.** Setting goals, even big goals, helps to boost self-esteem. When people reach goals they've set for themselves, they feel accomplished and proud. Celebrating the attainment of a goal internally helps to boost self-esteem.
- **Doing something for someone else.** Volunteering or simply helping someone in need of assistance - no matter how big or small the task - boosts confidence.
- **Facing and conquering anxieties or fears.** Sometimes conquering a fear can make a person feel strong, powerful and on top of the world. What better way to feel good about oneself than the feeling of having conquered something that was scary or challenging?
- **Taking pride in what can be done and accepting what can't be done.** Everyone has strong suits as well as limitations. Accepting limitations is a part of celebrating abilities and is important for a healthy self-esteem.
- **Focusing on positive attributes.** By focusing on things one does well, the brain can be trained to consistently focus on the positive.

Learning to have patience with oneself can take time if it's lacking, but patient self-acceptance is achievable by anyone. Having a healthy self-esteem has an incredible amount of benefits, including reduced stress and generally more contentment and happiness. Contentment and happiness are what make life joyful. It's possible to train the brain to have high self-esteem through some patience and practice.

Healthy Self-Esteem

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: I AM...

TIME

10-15 minutes

MATERIALS

Whiteboard or poster paper
Markers or colored pencils
Paper
Pen/pencil

Activity Description:

- Discuss positive self-talk. Positive self-talk is telling ourselves positive things. When we use positive self-talk, feelings about ourselves improve and can actually help us to do things that may be difficult.
- Examples of positive self-talk include: "I can do it," "I am strong," "I am creative."
- Brainstorm "I am" statements on the whiteboard.
- Individually, in partners, or as a group, allow participants to create a poster of "I am" statements.
- Allow participants to share with the group.
- Discuss when it might be helpful to use positive self-talk and "I am" statements in life.

Coach's Notes

Another option for practicing positive self-talk is to ask participants to assume a balance pose, such as "tree" pose (standing on one foot). While participants are standing in tree pose, ask them to think, "I am balanced," "I am strong," "I can do this." Next try standing in tree pose and use negative self-talk. Think to yourself, "I can't do this," "This is too hard," "I'm bad at this."

Healthy Self-Esteem

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: PROUD OF MYSELF

TIME

15-20 minutes

MATERIALS

- Paper
- Pen/pencil
- Markers or Colored Pencils

Activity Description:

- On a piece of paper at the top of the page, have participants write down at least five things they're proud of. Explain that their choices can include an unusual talent, a skill, or anything they're excited about in life.
- With a partner, answer the following questions at the bottom of the page.
- What are two strengths of this person?
- What is this person's most important accomplishment? What is he or she good at?
- How is this person a good friend to others?
- What does this person do to show a positive attitude?
- If there's time, participants can decorate their posters with markers or colored pencils.
- Allow participants to share their posters with the group. Explain that looking at a poster like this can help improve our self-esteem. Brainstorm where they could keep these posters to be reminded of the amazing things they do.

Coach's Notes

Remind participants that maintaining high self-esteem is not always easy, and some days can be very hard. With a little work and attitude adjustments, a strong and positive self-esteem is attainable. Learning to appreciate who you are as a person and all that you can do can help you to have a positive and healthy self-esteem.

NUTRITIONAL WELLNESS

Nutrition is one of the most important parts of our health. The food and drink we put into our bodies impacts how we think, feel and behave. It's a challenge to eat and drink in a balanced way to get the nutrients our bodies need. We can meet the challenge if we understand what healthy eating is and have access to a healthy variety of foods.

Food doesn't have to be "low fat" or "low calorie" to be balanced. Foods like that may have additives that aren't good for us. It's important to make sure that we eat a variety of nutrient rich foods.

Lessons in the **Nutritional Wellness pillar will explore what's in our food and on our plate. We'll talk about where our food comes from and how to prepare nutritious meals. We'll explain some basic terms and discuss what "balanced" means. The lessons also offer tips for making sure we're in balance and getting the essentials our bodies and minds need.**

LESSONS IN NUTRITIONAL WELLNESS

What's in My Food?

What's on My Plate?

Balanced Eating Every Day

Preparing Balanced Meals for the Week

Balanced Eating on the Run

Hunger or Appetite

Where Does My Food Come From?

Understanding Beverage Choices

Caffeine

Alcoholic Beverages

General Healthy Eating

Eating habits are hard to change when you've been following them for a long time. However, gradual modifications can make a big difference in the long run and new habits can be formed. The biggest thing you can do to change your diet is to become aware of your eating habits.

Be Aware of What You're Eating:

Of course we always want to aim to eat the healthiest foods that we can. Try and figure out what foods will give you the most nutrients with the least amount of empty calories (learn about empty vs. good calories in the lesson 'Good Calories vs. Empty Calories'). Following portion size is also key. It's good to know how much an appropriate serving size is and that you're keeping the amount of food you're eating in check. Make conscious decisions about the types of food you eat and strive to eat unprocessed food as much as possible. Unprocessed foods tend to have the least amount of chemicals in them and most health benefits. Organic food may not be as important as some people think, but making substitutions on food with better quality is a good idea. Try to eat whole grain bread that hasn't been processed or meats that haven't been treated to ensure quality and nutrient dense meals. Focus on eating clean food that has been properly prepared to eat.

Identify Things to Change:

A standard guideline to follow is to eat 3-5 substantial meals a day. These should be spread throughout the day with each meal containing proteins, fats and carbohydrates. Proteins, fats, and carbohydrates will provide your body with the necessary energy to perform your daily exercise.

Eating healthy snacks during the day is also a great way to keep an active metabolism. Eat small snacks in between meals to avoid hunger and keep up your daily energy. Depending upon your unique goals and body composition, timing and type of snacks will vary; however, try to decrease the amount of snacking later in the night.

Take Baby Steps. Change is Gradual:

Make sure you know that you're eating because you are hungry, rather than having cravings for food. Avoid eating for emotional reasons and keep in mind that 'food is fuel' for your body rather than your brain. If you find yourself in a social situation and feel the need to eat, you can still make health conscious decisions. Don't feel pressured into something you don't need to do and you can usually find decent alternatives to enjoy yourself with others. Eating food is an enjoyable experience, and it's okay to treat yourself once in a while. Put a limit on how much you eat and learn to enjoy your favorite foods in smaller quantities.



Portion Control

Portion control is about understanding how much food is in a serving size and is important for body weight management. Portion control is a great way to become more aware of the amounts of food you eat to better regulate caloric intake and nutrient consumption.

This is important in our everyday lives because following portion controls can mean a more balanced diet filled with proteins, healthy fats, and carbohydrates. If we eat foods in moderation, we can indulge on those sweets we love so much in smaller quantity and eat enough vegetables to get a healthy amount of nutrients. Portion control is about finding balance in how much and what type of food to eat.



Tricks for Portion Control:

DO:

- Measure out food into a separate container when eating.
- Take your time when preparing snacks/meals.
- Drink water beforehand to prevent overeating.
- Use smaller plates or bowls to make less seem like more.
- Treat yourself to your favorite foods, but only in moderation.
 - Example: 2 pieces of chocolate instead of the whole candy bar

DON'T:

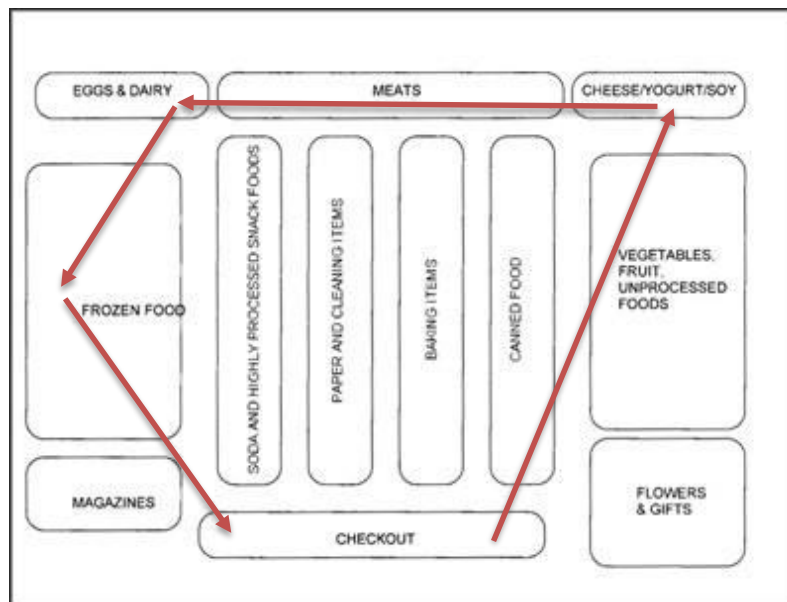
- Eat food straight out of the bag, eat too fast, or while you are distracted. These can cause you to end up eating too much.
- Rush and throw food together. This doesn't allow you to put together a proper, nutrient-dense meal.
- Deprive yourself from a meal or snack because you want to cut down. Instead of depriving yourself, have a smaller size to keep yourself in check and accountable.

Portion control is a great way to get us to stop and think about what we're eating and how much. Portion control helps us regulate the appropriate amount to eat and how much of it we can have to keep ourselves within a healthy diet and lifestyle.



Navigating the Grocery Store

The grocery store can be an intimidating place, filled with thousands of products. The first rule to successful shopping is to understand the layout of the store. Did you know the grocery store is organized to make us spend more time and money in the store than we planned? Think of your local grocery store; the entrance is likely filled with fresh flowers and the smell of fresh pastries while the essential items such as bread, milk and eggs are located at the back of the store. When you go to the store to buy a quick gallon of milk you have to walk through the aisles filled with cookies, soda pop and chips before making it to the dairy section. That said, the healthiest, nutrient rich foods are located around the perimeter of the store; make it a goal to buy most of your foods from the perimeter of the store.



Once knowledgeable about the layout of the store, it's time to shop! To make shopping a success, always remember SOfit!

Stomach – never go to the grocery store on an empty stomach. If you do, you'll notice you make more impulse purchases.

Organized – come to the store with a list of the groceries you will need for both meals and snacks. Try and organize the groceries by categories (produce, dairy, canned goods) to help you shop efficiently.

Fresh – eating fruits and vegetables can reduce the risk of many chronic diseases and promotes a healthy lifestyle. Don't limit purchases to fresh fruits and veggies and buy what is in season.

Inspect – read the Nutritional Facts label on all packaged products. Try to minimize the fat, salt and sugar content.

Thoughtful – make thoughtful choices. Be aware that grocery stores place the most "appealing" foods at eye level, but often these foods are not the best choices. Take the time to look both high and low on the shelves to find more appropriate options.



Healthy Beverage Choices

Generally, the best drink for your body is water. Water provides the body with everything it needs to quench your thirst and rehydrate your system. Let's also explore some other healthy options.

Healthy alternatives to water include tea and coffee. These are inexpensive beverages that, when plain, are calorie-free and loaded with antioxidants that may be good for health. These drinks are good choices because they are a natural way to get caffeine and could have potential health benefits in protecting against some diseases. However, we need to be careful with these (especially coffee) to avoid adding too much cream or flavoring because it can easily turn healthy drinks into unhealthy desserts. Many 'coffee treats' can be upwards of 500 calories of sugar and cream.



One simple healthy option might be to enhance your water. You can change up the water you drink by getting sparkling water or by adding some flavor. Sparkling water can be purchased at the store for relatively inexpensive prices and is a good substitute when you're craving something bubbly. You can also purchase water flavorings that are either liquid drops or powder packets - they tend to be low in calories and add taste to otherwise simple water. Another great option is to add fruit to your water, such as strawberries, watermelon and cantaloupe that can add taste to your water in a reasonably healthy way!

Sometimes, healthy beverages include choosing options that are better for you in replacement of those that aren't as healthy. Low-fat or skim milk are better alternatives if you're looking for less calories; however, whole milk has more nutrients and can be used in moderation.

Similar to powders or drops mentioned above, we might think that diet sodas or other diet drinks might be a good alternative. However, these alternatives can actually have negative effects on our bodies. Diet drinks are loaded with artificial sweeteners and some studies say they might actually lead to weight gain or body changes. These beverages should be consumed occasionally as a treat instead of a daily drink and are more beneficial when transitioning from unhealthy sodas to better options.

Overall, we should try and avoid beverages that are completely unhealthy. Unhealthy beverages include soda, fruit drinks, energy drinks and artificially flavored drinks that can contain chemicals and/or too much sugar. These beverages don't help hydrate the body or support its function and end up being a waste of our daily calories. We should try and drink as much water as we can and look into these other options when we're looking for something different as a treat!



Alcoholic Beverages – Effects and Moderation

Legal drinking age in the United States is 21!

Once you turn 21 and are legally allowed to drink alcohol, you should be familiar with the adverse effects alcohol has on your body. Drinking alcohol over the moderate limit (no more than 1 drink for women and 2 drinks for men)* can have effects on your brain, heart, liver, pancreas, and immune system. Alcohol interferes with communication pathways, basically affecting the functioning of your brain. Also, alcohol can cause issues to your heart muscle and heart beat as well as increased blood pressure. In regards to your liver, excessive alcohol intake may cause inflammations in your liver. Furthermore, in reaction to alcohol intake, the pancreas secretes toxic substances that can eventually cause inflammation of your pancreas. All of these issues lead to a weaker immune system and will make your body an easy target for illnesses and diseases! The listed above effects of excessive alcohol intake are more long-term issues. Short-term effects of alcohol include stress, loss of appetite, weight gain, disturbed sleeping habits, and many more! Other than long-term and short-term health effects, alcohol has a big influence on weight loss. Alcohol has calories and lots of them!

But what is considered one drink?? One drink is a 12oz bottle of beer, 5oz glass of wine, or 1.5oz shot of liquor.

Don't worry, alcohol is not always bad! There are some benefits in *moderate* alcohol intake. These benefits include reducing the risk of heart disease, ischemic stroke (blocking of the arteries that lead to your brain), diabetes.

If you're interested in having a drink or two with friends, here are some ways to make your alcoholic beverage not as jam-packed with calories!

- Make a 'mocktail'! Make your favorite cocktail, but forget to add the alcohol. Have a glass of wine or cocktail and then switch to mocktails to reduce the intake of calories!
- When mixing drinks, go for healthier alternatives. These may include diet sodas, juices, *light* juices, lemonade, or sugar-free mixers. Tastes just the same, but with less calories!
- Go for a glass of wine, light beer, or simple cocktail with a healthier alternative mixer option



Caffeine Effects

What is caffeine?

Caffeine is a naturally occurring substance in plants, but can also be a man-made substance added to our foods and drinks. It is typically healthy for adults to have up to 400 milligrams of caffeine per day before the good effects can turn bad. Caffeine provides no nutritional value and is tasteless. Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, cocoa, soda, energy drinks, chocolate, fruits and leaves.

The good:

Of course, caffeine acts as a stimulant to your central nervous system. It can help you feel more awake and alert and is commonly used to fight off tiredness.

However, having caffeine too often can cause both an addiction and increased tolerance. This means that the more we have caffeine, the more we tend to crave it and the less it affects us. So we have to be careful to not have too much caffeine in our daily diets.

The bad:

Caffeine can cause our bodies harm if we end up having too much of it.

Too much caffeine in the short run can cause headaches, heart burn, upset stomach, excessive thirst, increased blood pressure, and muscle twitches.

Too much caffeine in the long run can interfere with absorption and metabolism of calcium, leading to bone thinning (osteoporosis).

However, once someone regularly uses caffeine and then suddenly stops, withdrawal can occur.

Withdrawal of caffeine can also cause headaches, along with anxiety, irritability, and drowsiness, nausea, and achy muscles.

When drinking caffeine, it's important to find a balance. This lesson is not meant to scare you completely away from caffeine, but just to increase our awareness of how much caffeine we take in and what could happen if we tip that balance too much one way. If we can stay within the guidelines, we can consume caffeine smartly and safely



Dealing With Illness

Unfortunately, all of us get sick!

Sometimes it's a stuffy nose, or a fever, or your stomach just doesn't feel normal. How we handle our sickness can determine how long we stay sick or even who else we might spread our sickness to.

What should you do?

First, if you think you are really sick, you should tell someone and get to the doctor! They will know the best things to do to get you better.

But sometimes, we don't need to go to the doctor because your body can fight off the illness on its own. Stuff like getting the common cold or food poisoning are stuff that we can handle on our own and can get better without medicine from the doctor. So let's look at how to handle these illnesses and what to do to help!

What should you do to help?

Make sure you cover your nose when you sneeze! Using a Kleenex is the best way you can contain your germs and keep them away from other people. If you need to cough, again Kleenex is a good idea or just coughing into your elbow and away from people. Try not to cough or sneeze into your hands because that's the best way to spread your germs to other people and you might get them sick!

When you're sick, it's important to keep yourself clean. Wash your hands after you sneeze or cough to prevent spreading germs. Use a disinfecting wipe on the things that you use every day (like your phone, your desk, or TV remote) to kill the germs and stop them from spreading. We need to make sure we stop our germs from spreading to other people because we don't want other people to get sick!

With most illnesses, it's best to just take it easy. This means getting enough rest, eating well, and drinking lots of water. Listen to what your body needs, and don't push it past its limit! The better you take care of yourself while you're sick, the faster you can get better again.

If something seems much worse than normal, however, don't be scared to go to the doctor. It's better to be safe than sorry and they can help find out what you should do next if something is wrong.

How can I prevent getting sick?

Maintaining your hygiene is a great way to stay healthy and avoid getting sick. Washing your hands is critical to stop the spread of germs and preventing yourself and others from catching something. Keep your immune system strong (your body's way of fighting off illness) by eating healthy, staying active, and getting good sleep! In this way, your body can stay strong and be ready to fight against the bacteria that want to get you sick.

Getting sick is no fun, so it's important to stay healthy and learn how to deal with getting sick so that you can get better quick and easy, and back on your feet in no time!



How to Eat Healthy on Vacation

On the road:

When you're on the road for a long time, sometimes it's hard to make healthy decisions. Fast food is always an easy option that is usually pretty easy to find and relatively cheap—but tends to be high in calories, fat, and processed ingredients.

When you're on the road, a good idea is just to look at healthier places to buy your food.

- Subway is a good option to stop at because they tend to have better ingredients and you can choose what to add to your sandwich.
- Panera Bread is another good option for sandwiches or soup.
- You can even stop at a grocery store to grab an apple or a bag of carrots if you're really hungry and don't have many options.

If you have to stop at a fast food place, there is still room to make better decisions to eating healthy. A good decision is to simply order less of a food—maybe try a kids size meal or a smaller French fry size than you normally eat. Otherwise you can look for good alternatives—see if they have fruit available or try having a salad as a meal or side. Be careful though—sometimes salads aren't as healthy as you think because the dressings can be really high in calories. Be careful when adding it to the salad (less is more!)

The best way to avoid hunger when you're on the road is to pack snacks! This is the best way to choose what you're eating and prevent you from craving those unhealthy foods as you're driving. Some great snacks to pack and take on the road are:

- Grapes
- Pretzels
- Apples
- Carrots
- Nuts
- Popcorn

On vacation:

The main thing to remember while on vacation is just to be mindful of what you may be eating. It may be vacation and you should be relaxing, but it's still important to still take care of your body!

When you notice yourself getting hungry, take a second to think of healthy options that you could have. Whether that's buying food beforehand at a local grocery store or finding alternatives at a restaurant, there are many different ways to fill yourself up on food that tastes good and is healthy.

You're allowed to have some treats when on vacation; just make sure it's in moderation!



Hunger vs. Appetite

When we eat, it is either due to us needing food or wanting food.

Hunger is our physical *need to eat*. This is when our blood sugar levels are low and as a result our stomachs rumble, we get fatigued, and can suffer mood swings. Hunger occurs once you haven't eaten in a while and if food is eaten properly should only occur a few times throughout the day.

On the other hand, our appetite is our *desire to eat*. This is determined by cravings, boredom, or emotions rather than actual hunger and can occur at any time of day. Our appetite is usually what gets us in trouble when we are trying to eat healthy because it determines our preference for what kind of food we want to eat.

Sometimes it is hard to determine whether you are actually hungry for food or if you just have an appetite for food. The problem is that our appetite can make us want to eat food even when we aren't really hungry. Have you ever been really full from dinner but still ate that piece of chocolate cake for dessert because it still sounded delicious? That's your appetite speaking (and sometimes it becomes louder than your hunger). Our appetite can be hard to ignore, especially when you get into the routine of listening to your appetite rather than hunger and it becomes normal.

So how can we change this?

The best way to decide if you should eat is to simply listen to your body. Are you exhibiting symptoms of needing food or exhibiting symptoms of wanting food?

This is a battle between your stomach and your brain. Each may be telling you different things, but you should take a step back and listen to what your stomach is saying because that is where hunger originates from. If you are actually hungry, then you can think of healthy food that you can eat to fill you up. If you aren't actually hungry and are rather simply craving food, you can recognize this and remind yourself that you don't need to eat.

Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference between your hunger and appetite. The key is to take a second to listen to what your body needs rather than what your brain may want. By identifying the differences you can become mentally stronger and take more control over your diet. You can eliminate those unhealthy foods that you desire and instead eat those healthy foods that are essential.

By distinguishing your hunger and appetite, you are making a better choice to live a healthier lifestyle.



Preparing Meals for the Week

Meal planning is a good way to start making healthier food choices. It can help you have more control over your caloric intake and help you maintain healthy eating goals as well as guarantee a more nutritious, well-balanced diet. A great way to start meal planning is to write a list of your favorite foods and meals then write a 1-month rotation of your favorite recipes onto a calendar. Remember to include a variety of food groups in each of your meals. Each week create a grocery list including all the ingredients you will need to make your meals for the week. Making a grocery list before you go to the store is a good way to prevent making impulse decisions and buying junk food.

Another great consideration is keeping healthy snacks such as fruits, veggies and protein choices (like nuts, cheese, and yogurt) stocked in your fridge and cupboards. It is easier to make better decisions when you have a good variety of healthy options available.

Example of a Weekly Meal Planner:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast	Cereal with milk	Toast with peanut butter	Oatmeal with raisins	Yogurt and fresh fruit	Cereal with milk	Whole wheat English muffin with jam	Pancakes with syrup
Lunch	Turkey and cheese sandwich with an apple	Grilled chicken and fruit salad	Cheese and crackers with carrots and hummus	Grilled chicken with salad	Pasta salad with broccoli	Peanut butter and jelly sandwich with a banana	Cheese and crackers with carrots and hummus
Snack	Carrots and hummus	Broccoli florets	Pear	Almonds	Apple and peanut butter	Mango	Ants on a log (celery, peanut butter and raisins)



Dinner	Meatloaf with green beans	Chili	Chicken fajitas with black beans	Steamed fish with broccoli	Hamburger with grilled veggies	Pizza night!	Tacos with side of brown rice
--------	------------------------------------	-------	--	----------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------	----------------------------------

Plan and Prep:

The two P's for successful meal planning are **plan** and **prep**. Plan your meals for the week as discussed above. Then take the time once a week to prep your food. This includes washing/peeling/chopping/cutting your fresh fruit and veggies so they can be available later when you are preparing a meal or to eat as a healthy snack.

Resources

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/meals.html

Healthy Eating – Vermont Department of Health

<http://healthvermont.gov/eatforhealth/index.aspx>

Harvard School of Public Health

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-eating-plate/>



Good Calories Vs. Empty Calories

- **Calorie:** a unit of food energy, found in all different kinds of food.
 - Some foods have more calories than others and some foods have higher quality calories than others.
 - Your body needs calories for energy to do all of your daily activities.
- **Empty calories:** calories with no nutritional value and don't supply good energy for your body.
 - These calories are found in processed foods that are calorie dense instead of nutrient dense.
 - Empty calories come from solid fats and/or added sugar.
 - Since empty calories lack appropriate nutrients, you are left feeling hungrier and less satisfied when you eat foods that contain empty calories

Examples of Food with Empty Calories:

- Cookies
- Soda
- Ice cream
- Pizza
- Bacon
- Cake
- Donuts



Examples of Nutrient-Dense Calories:

- Fresh fruit
- Vegetables
- Eggs
- Oatmeal
- Lean cuts of meat



- Try and limit the amount of empty calories you eat each day, and instead try and eat *good calories*.
 - Good calories are much more nutrient dense than empty calories and provide more energy for your body.
 - Nutrient to calorie ratio is far greater in foods with good calories versus empty calories.
 - You are able to eat fewer calories throughout the day but still have substance in your diet and feel full longer.

- **Empty calorie:** A piece of white bread - 80 calories, 100 micrograms Vitamin E
- **Nutrient dense:** A piece of whole wheat bread - 80 calories, 250-500 micrograms Vitamin E

Main Idea:

When you make the decision on which food you should eat, choose the ones that are more nutrient dense! You get “more bang for your buck” per calorie when you eat better foods with good calories as well as help with your overall health.





Nutritional Wellness Activities

WHAT'S IN MY FOOD?

Key Messages

There's no such thing as "good" food and "bad" food.

Essential nutrients are minerals, vitamins, carbohydrates, fat, protein and water.

Nutrient dense foods include many or all of the essential nutrients. Nutrient deficient foods provide none or lower amounts of essential nutrients.

Background

Let's begin by taking a look at some basic nutrition concepts. Food is fuel for the body. It gives us the energy we need for everything we do. To measure how much energy a given food supplies, we use calories. A **calorie** is a unit of energy in food. Calories are found in all types of food, including food that is "nutrient dense" or "nutrient deficient." **Empty calorie** food has calories - but without the nutrition we need.

Nutrient dense foods are rich in essential nutrients such as vitamins and minerals. Our bodies also need the essentials of fiber, protein and unsaturated fats. Nutrient dense foods provide long-term energy and satiety (feeling of fullness). They fuel the brain for better concentration, learning, confidence and stress relief. Examples of nutrient dense foods: Fresh fruit, vegetables, eggs, oatmeal, whole grain breads, rice, cereal, lean meat, and milk.

Nutrient deficient foods lack the above essential nutrients and may be made up of empty calories. Nutrient deficient foods provide short bursts of energy followed by feelings of hunger and fatigue. They can contribute to insomnia, lower concentration, learning difficulty, and difficulty managing feelings and emotions. Examples of nutrient deficient foods or food with empty calories: Sugar, cookies, soda, fruit drinks, ice cream, chips, pizza, bacon, cake, and donuts

Essential Nutrients Recommendations

Carbohydrates: Whole grains, fiber and vegetables

Protein: Nuts, legumes, and lean meats such as fish, chicken, and turkey

Fats: Unsaturated fats (baked foods instead of fried foods)

Vitamins: A, D E, K and the B vitamins

Minerals: Iron, calcium, potassium

Water: 8-12 cups

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: THIS OR THAT

TIME

20-30 minutes

MATERIALS

Labels and pictures of food that are in the same food category (cereals, snacks, drinks, etc.)

Activity Description:

Show a series of photos or bring in the real food. Hand out food labels for the different foods. Ask participants which foods would be considered nutrient dense or nutrient deficient (empty calories). Show pictures of the following foods:

- Wheat and white bread
- Sugar rich cereals
- Brown pasta and white pasta (or rice)
- Granola bar options
- 100% or fresh squeezed juice or 5% juice

WHAT'S IN MY FOOD?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: THIS OR THAT CONTINUED

- Banana pudding or a banana
- Applesauce or an apple

Have participants look at the food label and tell why each is in its category.

Coach's Notes

Highlight the vitamins, minerals and sugar content in each food. Be sure to explain that fresh fruit is sweet because it's made up of natural sugars. Sugar such as high fructose corn syrup is added to some products to make them sweet. Fresh fruit may have sugar, but it also has many more vitamins and minerals. Compare wheat products and white products (cereals, breads, pasta and rice). "Whole grains" have all the vitamins and minerals intact, not removed as with white products. White products have been stripped of the nutrients and may have extras like sugar added for flavor.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: PROCESSED FOOD...IT'S EVERYWHERE!

TIME

5-10 minutes

MATERIALS

**A variety of coupons with pictures of food
Scissors**

Activity Description:

- Have participants look at the coupons to find three to five foods that would be considered nutrient dense and three to five that are nutrient deficient. Have them cut out the foods and sort into two categories.
- Allow individuals to find more if time permits.
- Have participants share some of their food items and why they put them in each category.

Coach's Notes

"Processed food" is a term used to define foods that are changed through processing from their natural state. For example, a french fry was a potato in the ground at one time. Another example, corn from the stalk is processed into high fructose corn syrup. The ingredients in the label that do not seem to be in their raw state are using chemicals added to the food. Some reasons why chemicals are added to our food include:

- Change the color. Example: yellow color of some drink products
- Disinfect and deodorize food (as in bleaching). Example: white flour
- Change texture. Example: the crunch in chips or the smoothness of spreads
- Soften. Example: cheese spread creamy
- Improve shelf life. Example: boxed items like macaroni and cheese
- Sweeten. Example: high fructose corn syrup added
- Mask smell. Example: covers up all the processing in processed food
- Add flavor. Example: orange flavor in drinks instead of real oranges

Essential nutrients are often destroyed in processing. This leads to a food that is nutrient deficient rather than nutrient dense. As a general rule for ingredient lists-- if it has five or more ingredients, it is most likely processed.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Key Messages

- There are long-term and short-term effects from drinking alcohol.
- It is my choice if I want to drink alcohol.
- I can be safe if I drink alcohol responsibly.
- Media messages about alcohol can be misleading.

Background

How much is one drink? 12-oz beer, 5-oz glass of wine or 1.5-shot of hard liquor (such as vodka). Excessive alcohol consumption is responsible for about 88,000 deaths in the United States each year (CDC*). Binge drinking is responsible for more than half of these deaths. Binge drinking is defined as having four or more drinks in a two-hour period.

Short-Term Effects of Alcohol Use

- Impaired speech
- Drowsiness
- Vomiting
- Digestive problems such as diarrhea and upset stomach
- Impaired judgment (tendency to make poor decisions)
- Impaired coordination, reaction time and perception
- Impaired vision and hearing
- Blackouts (impaired memory during alcohol consumption)

Long-Term Effects of Alcohol Misuse or Abuse

- Disruption of normal brain development
- Liver diseases such as cirrhosis
- Damage to brain cells
- Stomach and intestinal ulcers
- High blood pressure that can cause heart disease and stroke
- Decrease in male sperm production

Moderate drinking is better. Moderate drinking means you drink only a small amount. For women, moderate drinking is one alcoholic drink a day. For men, moderate drinking is two alcoholic drinks a day. Of course you don't have to drink alcohol at all.

The phrase "Drink Responsibly" can mean different things to different people. There are a number of different aspects to what it means to drink responsibly. The main thing to remember is to be sure you and the people around you stay safe.

- Avoid drinking and driving.
- Avoid getting in a vehicle with someone who has been drinking.
- Wait until it's legal to drink (age 21 in the United States).
- Avoid mixing alcohol and other drugs.
- Avoid going to parties alone where alcohol may be present.
- Never leave a drink unattended.
- To drink responsibly, use your common sense. If your inner voice is telling you that something is not a good idea, then it probably is not a good idea.

* Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WHY DRINK WHEN I CAN...?

TIME

15-40 minutes

MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper
Large paper for poster making
Markers or colored pencils**

Activity Description

Ask participants: *Why do you think some people start drinking, even if they don't want to drink?*

- Attention from certain groups of people
- Do not want to be different
- Do not want to cause an issue with people, give in
- Advertising makes it look cool
- Media and movies portray it as if everyone is drinking to have fun

Ask participants: *What are some things to say if you feel pressured to drink?*

- "No, thanks."
- "I don't feel like it- do you have anything else to drink?"
- "No, alcohol really isn't my thing."
- "Please respect my decision. I said no. Please don't ask me again."
- "My family has a history with alcohol, and I don't want to go down that path."

People can find lots of things to do to have fun that don't involve alcohol. Write this sentence starter on the board: *"Why drink when I can _____?"*

- Generate a list of all the fun things people could do instead of drinking alcohol.
- List the fun activities you can share with friends who have common interests.

If time, have the group make posters of their "natural highs," naming all the things they enjoy and can do instead of drinking.

Coach's Notes

Make sure participants know that natural highs act on the same part of the brain that alcohol does to produce a feeling of high or euphoria. Also, by learning to communicate with people about your wants and needs, you can stay true to your beliefs and morals around drinking. Encourage participants to stay true to who they are, and encourage them to look closer at the people trying to pressure them. It is helpful to listen to our inner voice. If your inner voice says something is wrong or not for you, listen to it. Your value system is trying to protect you from guilt or poor decision making.

WHAT'S ON MY PLATE?

Key Messages

- Foods shouldn't be labeled as "good" or "bad," but as "nutrient dense" or "nutrient deficient."
- All foods have purpose in a balanced diet.
- I will study and learn the content of food labels.

Background

When thinking about the food on our plate, it's important to consider a variety of foods from all food groups as well as the variety of essential nutrients that we get only from these foods. Understanding the nutritional information of the foods we eat is a way to become more aware of balance in our eating. Our body and mind need proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals and plenty of water. The only way to accomplish this is to eat a variety of food.

It's important to recognize that all foods hold a purpose for our bodies. Labeling foods as "good" or "bad," and even "healthy" or "unhealthy" may add to feelings of shame some people feel about eating. Think of foods as "nutrient dense" (or "nutrient rich") and "nutrient deficient." These terms keep the focus on the important goal of getting all the essential nutrients. Some foods are high in calories, yet have all the essential nutrients, while others are low in calories but offer few essential nutrients. This is why it's important to understand the contents on food labels and the misconceptions about how foods are labeled.

- **Balanced Eating:** Eat a variety of foods so your body and mind get the essential nutrients you need.
- **Empty Calories:** Foods that do not have any of the essential nutrients.



Tips to Balanced Eating

- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables because they are nutrient dense.
- Drink 8-12 glasses of water each day.
- Eat a variety of meats, including lean meats such as fish, chicken and turkey, as well as other protein sources such as nuts and legumes.
- Remember foods such as ice cream, candy, baked goods, soda, and fruit beverages are nutrient deficient and should be eaten in moderation.
- Know the ingredients in the foods you eat (for example: fresh food or processed food).
- Eat throughout the day: breakfast, lunch, dinner and two-three snacks.
- Balanced eating is a great way to get us to stop and think about what our body and mind need for energy and being at our best. Balanced eating shows that we understand that not all foods are equal in nutrients.

WHAT'S ON MY PLATE?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: UNDERSTANDING FOOD LABELS

TIME

15 minutes

MATERIALS

1-3 food labels for each pair

Activity Description:

This activity will help explain the contents of a food label.

- Find serving size. The nutritional information is for one serving.
- Find the calories (“fuel for our bodies”). Multiply by number of servings for total calories.
- Find the ingredients list. It’s ordered from greatest amount to least. Are the ingredients real food or are they chemicals?
- Find the sugar, sodium, and saturated fat daily percentage. Is there a high percentage for daily value?
- Find the percentages of daily vitamins and minerals. Is there a high percentage for daily value? Or is it zero percent?
- Find daily recommendations for calories. Are the calories for this food empty calories or packed with essential nutrients?

Coach’s Notes

Option to have another label with a similar food and compare the two labels. Have participants recommend the better choice for balance and essential nutrients.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WHAT IS A SERVING SIZE?

TIME

10-15 minutes

MATERIALS

Chips, crackers, cereal, a sugary drink
Measuring cup
Bowls for each food
Clear glass for the drink
Copies of the food labels for everyone, or display on a screen

Activity Description:

Give participants an item of food or drink. Talk about the serving size of the food or drink. Have participants measure what one serving looks like using measuring cups.

Then have the participants measure out the amount they would choose to have of the food or drink. This is most likely a more realistic serving.

Then have the participants do the math to determine the calories in the more realistic serving.

Coach’s Notes

“Portion control” and “moderation” are terms that are used quite often in nutrition. Most of the time when we read a food label, we don’t think about the calories and nutrients listed as one serving of the product. Discuss how people often eat more servings than what is listed on the label. We can take in more calories than we need in certain food items and still not get our essential nutrients.

BALANCED EATING EVERY DAY

Key Messages

- A balanced meal plan is important every day.
- Balanced eating takes planning and preparation.
- Balanced meal planning can include dessert.

Background

Eating habits are hard to change when you've been following them for a long time. Gradual changes make all the difference when creating new healthy habits. The most important thing you can do to balance your diet is to become aware of your eating habits.

Be Aware of What You Are Eating

- Choose foods that are considered nutrient dense: *whole grains, fresh fruits, vegetables, milk, and lean meats such as turkey, chicken and fish.*
- Stay away from foods that are considered nutrient deficient: *candy, soda, cookies, chips, ice cream and fried foods.*
- Educate yourself about the information in food labels: *serving size, ingredients, nutrients, and more.*
- Strive to eat fresh, unprocessed foods. This includes whole grain breads, meats and dairy products without antibiotics, and fresh fruits and vegetables without packaging.
- Balanced meal planning can include dessert. It's okay to treat yourself once in a while.

Identify Areas for Growth

- Try to eat 3-5 meals per day.
- Include lean proteins, unsaturated fats, and complex carbohydrates for long-term energy.
- Try to eat something every two hours, including balanced snacks, to keep metabolism (energy) levels up.
- Eat smaller snacks between meals to avoid hunger and lowered energy.
- Drink 8-12 glasses of water per day.
- Limit caffeine intake late in the day, as this can impact sleep if after 2 pm.
- Avoid late evening snacking, as this can impact sleep if after 6 pm.

BALANCED EATING EVERY DAY

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: ENERGY IN OR ENERGY OUT

TIME

5-15 minutes

MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper
Markers**

Activity Description

Read the following scenarios with participants and complete the questions.

Explain to the group that they will use the formula $1 \text{ pound} = 3500 \text{ calories}$ to answer the questions about energy in and energy out.

It may be helpful to write the formula on the whiteboard or poster paper.

Scenario 1: A soccer player has been eating about 3000 calories per day. With her rigorous training, she has been burning about 6500 calories per day.

- What do you notice using the energy in vs energy out formula? Example of answer: She isn't eating enough calories for her daily routine.
- How do you think this athlete feels during the day? Example of answers: Tired, sluggish, not much energy for games, etc.
- Using the formula $1 \text{ pound} = 3500 \text{ calories}$, what may happen to this athlete after a week of this pattern of eating? Example of answers: She may lose about a pound a day and 5-7 pounds by the end of the week. Due to the high exertion, this loss could be muscle weight, which is not what an athlete wants.
- What do you recommend she do differently? Example of answers: Eat more calories from protein and other essential nutrient dense foods to maintain muscle weight and energy level.

Scenario 2: A busy educator has little time to prepare balanced, nutrient dense meals. He is constantly running from place to place and eating on the run. His calorie totals are about 3500 per day. Due to the lack of time and energy, he is not exercising at this time.

- What do you notice using the energy in vs energy out formula? Example of answer: He's eating too many calories for his daily routine.
- How do you think this educator feels during the day? Example of answers: Tired, sluggish, not much energy due to the lack of essential nutrients in the body.
- Using the formula $1 \text{ pound} = 3500 \text{ calories}$, what may happen to the educator after a week of this pattern of eating? Example of answers: He may gain about a pound a day and 5-7 pounds by the end of the week. Due to the low exertion and lack of exercise, he may not have much energy.
- What do you recommend he do differently? Example of answers: Plan and prepare meals and snacks to guarantee more balance in nutrient dense foods. Try to walk or do some form of exercise to keep metabolism up.

Coach's Notes

Be sure to mention Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) and Body Mass Index (BMI). BMR is the rate at which the body burns calories. There is a formula based on height, weight, and age. The formula determines how many calories an individual needs for everyday body functioning at rest. BMI is used to determine ideal weight. BMI is not an accurate representation of ideal weight, as it doesn't take into account the difference between fat and muscle in the body. For example, a bodybuilder would be considered obese when using this formula, $1 \text{ pound} = 3500 \text{ calories}$.

BALANCED EATING EVERY DAY

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: ABCS OF BALANCE

TIME

5-10 minutes

MATERIALS

**Paper or chart with ABCs listed
Pen/pencil**

Activity Description:

Divide participants into partners or groups of four.

Have participants fill in the blanks for the following food groups, matching the first letter with a different spot on the ABC chart.

- Fruits
- Complex Carbohydrates (include vegetables)
- Complete Proteins (include dairy and nuts, etc.)

Use this as a fun speed game to see who can fill in the most blanks.

After completed, discuss the carbohydrates and proteins chart. Discuss which foods are balanced choices with essential nutrients.

Coach's Notes

When discussing the complex carbohydrates, be sure to point out foods that are not nutrient dense (white bread, rice, pasta, white crackers, simple sugar rich cereals, etc.). For protein, point out fried foods (bacon, sausage, etc.) and cheese and how these foods may be high in saturated fats (solid fat). Educate participants that solid fat is what is deposited inside the arteries. Over time, it could possibly cause heart attacks and high blood pressure. Discuss how meat is cooked and that it may be a better choice to grill, broil, bake and cook with vegetable oils rather than cook with butter or grease.

PREPARING BALANCED MEALS FOR THE WEEK

Key Messages

- I will understand steps to planning a balanced meal.
- Foods of different colors can have different nutrients.
- Planning and preparation guarantee balance.

Background

Meal planning is a good way to start making balanced food choices. It can help you guarantee a balanced plan that includes all the essential nutrients to provide enough energy for your mind and body. Your plan can also help you achieve any special goals, such as the nutrition you need for a sport or other activity. One way to start meal planning is to write a list of your favorite foods and meals. Then create a one-month rotation of your favorite recipes by noting them on a calendar. Remember to include a variety of food groups, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains in your daily plan. Each week, create a grocery list including all the ingredients you'll need to make your meals for the week. Making a grocery list before you go to the store is one way to prevent making impulse decisions and buying foods that are nutrient deficient.

Another consideration is keeping a variety of snacks such as fresh fruits, vegetables, and protein choices like nuts, cheese and yogurt stocked in the kitchen. It's easier to make balanced decisions when you have a variety of nutrient rich options readily available.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast	Whole Grain cereal and milk	Whole grain toast and almond butter	Oatmeal with bananas or raisins and milk	Greek yogurt and fresh fruit	Egg and whole grain toast	Whole grain pancakes and fresh fruit	Greek yogurt and fruit shake
Lunch	Turkey and cheese sandwich on whole grain bread and an apple	Grilled chicken and fruit salad	Cheese and whole grain crackers with carrots and hummus	Grilled lean meat on a salad with various dressing	Whole grain pasta or rice with vegetable	PB&J sandwich on whole grain bread with a banana	Whole grain tortillas with stirfried chicken and vegetables
Snack	Carrots and hummus	Celery and almond butter	Almonds and/or Chex mix	Apple and almond butter	Black bean nachos	Whole grain granola bar	Yogurt or fresh fruit
Dinner	Meatloaf and green beans	Chili	Chicken fajitas with black beans	Steamed or grilled fish with a vegetable	Hamburger and grilled vegetable	Pizza with a variety of toppings	Tacos and brown rice

PREPARING BALANCED MEALS FOR THE WEEK

Plan and Prep

The two P's for successful meal planning are Plan and Prep. Plan your meals for the week as discussed above. Take the time once a week to prep your food. This includes washing, peeling, chopping and cutting your fresh fruit and vegetables so they can be available later in the week when you are preparing a meal or have a quick snack.

Suggested Activity: My Rainbow Meal

TIME

15-20 minutes

MATERIALS

**Paper
Pen/pencil
Markers**

Activity Description

- Have individuals make a list of their favorite foods in all the food groups.
- Use those foods to fill in a plan for a week like the chart above.
- Color code the foods to make sure there is balance.

Red: *Fruits*

Green: *Vegetables*

Orange: *Grains*

Blue: *Dairy*

Purple: *Meats and protein*



Coach's Notes

Emphasize the importance of seeing a rainbow of foods every day and in every meal.

PREPARING BALANCED MEALS FOR THE WEEK

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Lunch							
Snack							
Dinner							

BALANCED EATING ON THE RUN

Key Messages

I will understand ways to make balanced choices when I am in a hurry.
I can make balanced choices even when I eat at fast food restaurants.

Background

When you're on the go with a busy lifestyle, sometimes it's hard to make balanced decisions. The main thing to remember is to be mindful of what you may be eating and if you are maintaining balance in essential nutrients.

In a Hurried Week

If you have to stop at a fast food restaurant, you can still make balanced choices with nutrient dense foods. Things to consider when ordering at a fast food restaurant:

- Order a smaller size, which can save you from excess empty calories.
- Add vegetables to your sandwich.
- Choose grilled options instead of fried.
- How about a salad? Use less dressing to make the salad more nutrient dense.
- Unsweetened ice tea or soda? There are no empty calories in tea, but it does have caffeine.
- Order fruit as a side for a nutrient rich choice.
- It's okay to have a sweet snack if you're still hungry.

On Vacation

Relaxing on vacation is a must, but it's still important that we nourish our body and mind to give them an energetic, balanced vacation as well. It's easy to let our appetite take over on vacation, but make it a goal to still pay attention to hunger cues and be mindful of including the balanced meals we need. When you notice yourself getting hungry, take a moment to think of balanced options. You can buy food beforehand at a local grocery store or find alternatives at a restaurant. There are many different ways to fill yourself up on food that tastes good and also offers the nutrients you need.

The best way to avoid hunger when you're on the road is to pack snacks. That way you can choose what you're eating. This prevents you from letting your appetite and cravings take control. Some snacks to pack and take on the road are:

- Fruits
- Pretzels
- Crackers and hummus
- Tortilla chips and salsa or guacamole
- Vegetables and garden dip
- Cheese and whole wheat crackers
- Popcorn
- Nuts or trail mix

BALANCED EATING ON THE RUN

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: FAST FOOD MENU

TIME

5-10 minutes

MATERIALS

**Two or three fast food menus
Paper
Pen/pencil**

Activity Description:

- Have participants choose a fast food restaurant menu to look at.
- Ask them to write down a meal they have had in the past. Include a sandwich, side dish and drink.
- Alter the meal in a way to add more essential nutrients and lower saturated fat, sodium and calories.
- Have participants share their changes and discuss.

Coach's Notes

Share the information above about how to make balanced choices at a fast food restaurant. Consider limiting sizes, adding vegetables, and choosing baked or grilled items.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: A SNACK WITH BALANCE

TIME

5 minutes

MATERIALS

None

Activity Description:

Ask participants to bring a balanced snack to the next session.

Explain that they will each be allowed to share what their snack is and why it is balanced with the group.

Coach's Notes

Share some of the above examples or others of your own to give the participants ideas of snacks.

HUNGER OR APPETITE

Key Messages

I will learn how to identify my individual hunger cues.

I will understand the difference between hunger and appetite.

Breakfast can help maintain balanced, consistent eating throughout the day.

Background

Hunger is the physical need for food. It occurs when the energy level in our blood is low several hours after eating. It is a protective measure that makes sure the body has the right amount of energy.

Appetite is our desire for food. It is a sensory reaction to the look or smell of food and can make us think that we are hungrier than we actually are.

Appetite is closely linked with behavior and cravings. Cravings are linked to snack items that are considered empty calories or nutrient deficient. Have you ever been really full from dinner but still ate a piece of chocolate cake for dessert because it sounded delicious? That is your appetite and sometimes it is stronger than hunger. It's difficult to determine whether you are actually hungry for food or if you just have an appetite or craving for food. The problem is that our appetite can make us want to eat food even when we are not really hungry. Our appetite or cravings can be hard to ignore, especially when we get into the routine of listening only to our appetite rather than paying attention to hunger cues.

What Can We Do?

The best way to decide when to eat is simply to listen to your body. Are you exhibiting symptoms of needing food or exhibiting symptoms of wanting food?

- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling fatigued or tired
- Stomach growling

Appetite or wanting food usually stems from boredom or cravings. This is a battle between your stomach and your brain. Each may be telling you different things. Stop and listen to what your stomach is saying, because that is where hunger comes from. If you're actually hungry, then you can think of nutrient rich foods that you can eat to satisfy the hunger and provide the body with long-term energy. If you're not hungry and are simply craving food, you can recognize this and remind yourself that this is not hunger, but instead, your appetite.

Sometimes it's difficult to tell the difference between hunger and appetite. The key is to take a second to listen to what your body needs, rather than what your brain wants. There's nothing wrong with giving in to our appetite and cravings sometimes. Food provides comfort in more ways than just satisfying hunger. It's important to make sure we're getting the essential nutrients our body and mind needs. By recognizing hunger cues, we can be more aware that this is our body telling us it needs balanced nutrients that provide long-term energy.

Plenty of research supports the fact that eating a balanced breakfast can help decrease the probability of binge eating or appetite-guided eating throughout the day. Studies around breakfast tend to show that people who eat a balanced breakfast:

- Eat more nutrient dense foods throughout the day.
- Participate in more physical activity.
- Are less lethargic, restless and irritable.
- Choose foods that are rich in whole grains, fiber, and protein while low in added sugar.

HUNGER OR APPETITE

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: HUNGER QUICK WRITE/JOURNAL

TIME

5 minutes

MATERIALS

**Paper
Pen/pencil**

Activity Description:

Have participants write a short reflection on their eating practices for the current day or the day before.

Questions to think about when writing:

- What time did you eat?
- Why did you eat when you did?
- What did you eat?
- How did you feel when you were eating?
- How did you feel after you ate?

Allow participants to share with the group if there is time.

Coach's Notes

The idea with the quick write is for participants to pay attention to the cues surrounding our eating. We want to see if there is an emotional connection or if we are truly eating when our hunger cues are triggered. It's also helpful to consider whether we're truly eating a balanced diet rather than a diet encouraged by our appetite and cravings.

HUNGER OR APPETITE

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: THE POWER OF BREAKFAST

TIME

15-20 minutes

MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper
Markers**

Activity Description:

Ask participants: What does the term “breakfast” mean?

- Break: to separate or divide
- Fast: a period of time without food
- Breakfast: break the fast

- How many hours do you usually sleep? This period is the fast.
- How many hours on a typical day between lunch and dinner?
- **Why is breaking your fast so important before you start your day?** Example of answers: *Less tired, more alert and able to concentrate, more active, less likely to binge eat throughout the day, more likely to make balanced food choices, perform better academically and on extra curricular activities*
- **Explain to participants** that our bodies are not meant to fast from dinner one night to lunch the next day. This puts our bodies into a starvation mode and causes the brain and body to slow down to naturally conserve energy. Because of this protective measure, it leaves you feeling lethargic, less able to concentrate, and irritable throughout the day.
- **Ask participants:** Why do some people not eat breakfast? Example of answers: *Want to sleep in, no time, nothing to eat at home, not hungry, too long to prepare, and do not like breakfast foods*
- **Ask participants:** What are some solutions for eating breakfast each morning? Example of answers: *Go to bed earlier, get up 15 minutes earlier, eat school breakfast, pack breakfast to eat on the way to school or work, plan a couple quick breakfasts beforehand, and eat leftovers from the dinner the night before.*
- **Ask:** What makes a balanced breakfast? Example of answers: *Choosing at least three from the following food groups: Fruits, whole grains, protein, and dairy, plus foods low in added sugars and fat, but high in vitamins, minerals and fiber.*
- Suggest for participants to try breakfast and come back to the group and share their strategy for making sure they had breakfast and what they chose to eat.

Coach's Notes

The discussion in this activity can be a great way for participants to learn from each other about breakfast habits and the importance of breakfast. It may even provide each other with ideas about what to eat for breakfast.

Where Does My Food Come From?



Key Messages

I will follow a food footprint from the ground to the store.
Eating local has less processing and can be cheaper in price.

Background

The grocery store has thousands of products, and people don't tend to think about where the food comes from. If asked where our food comes from, many people would say grocery stores, restaurants or corner markets. We don't always think about how products came to be in these locations or how they grew in the ground. One reason for this is that we see the food in a final stage of processing, after it has been packaged or cooked and prepared for eating. What do we think about with orange juice? We rarely remember that it was once an orange hanging on a tree. How about pasta sauce? Sometimes we forget that the tomatoes were actually growing on a vine.

It's important for us to understand where our food comes from and how it gets to our plates. Would our grocery shopping choices change if we knew?

Where Does My Food Come From?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: FOOD FOOTPRINT

TIME

15-20 minutes

MATERIALS

Peanut butter (picture or real prop)

Activity Description:

- Ask the following questions about peanut butter:
- **Growing:** Where do the peanuts come from? Example of answers: *Grown in fields*
- **Transportation:** How do peanuts get to the factory? Example of answers: *Trucks to the factory*
- **Processing:** Why do peanuts need to go to a factory? How are the peanuts changed during processing? Example of answers: *They are roasted and cooled, peanuts are ground up and the shells are removed, salt and oils are added and then cooled to package.*
- **Packaging:** What is the packaging made of that holds the peanut butter? Example of answers: *Plastic containers or glass jars*
- **Buying:** Where can you get peanut butter? Example of answers: *Grocery stores, corner stores, farmers markets, make your own*
- **Cooking:** Example of answers: *Baking...any others?*
- **Eating:** How do we eat peanut butter? Example of answers: *In cookies, on toast, in cereal, etc.*
- **Recycling/Reusing:** What can we do with the packaging after we eat the peanut butter? Example of answers: *Rinse out and recycle in appropriate container or reuse it for something else.*

Coach's Notes

If someone in the group has an allergy to peanut butter, choose a different product to explore, for example, sun butter or almond butter.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WHAT IS YOUR FOOD FOOTPRINT? *

TIME

10-15 minutes

MATERIALS

**Copies of Food Footprint Questionnaire for each participant
Pen/pencil**

Activity Description

- Go through each question of the questionnaire as a group to assist with comprehension.
- Have individuals complete the questionnaire.
- Allow participants to share their final score.
- Discuss how their food footprint can have an impact on the environment.
- As a group, brainstorm other ways they can reduce their food footprint.
- Ask participants to try two things to decrease their food footprint.

Coach's Notes

It might be helpful to go through each question with the participants to point out definitions of terms such as farmers market, fast food, diet choices and different fruits.

* Activity used with permission. What's On Your Plate? Project. DVD, book, online games, & curriculum can be found at <http://www.whatsonyourplateproject.org/>. Produced by Aubin Pictures www.aubinpictures.com in collaboration with Solar One. To view other Solar One curricula please visit <http://www.thegreendesignlab.org/>



What's Your Food Footprint?

Name _____

Directions: Answer the questions below. See how you did by using the key below!

1. How often do you eat meat?

- a. I'm vegan (I eat no animal products.)
- b. I'm a vegetarian (I don't eat any meat.)
- c. I eat meat 1 to 4 days a week.
- d. I eat meat every day.

2. If you eat meat, which type of meat do you eat most often?

- a. I told you already! I don't eat meat!
- b. Turkey or Chicken
- c. Lamb or Pork
- d. Beef

3. How often do you eat fast food?

- a. I never eat fast food.
- b. Sometimes. 2-3 times a month.
- c. I eat fast food a lot. But I would rather eat healthy!
- d. I love fast food. I would eat it everyday if I could (and sometimes I do.)

4. How often do you buy food from local farmers markets?

- a. I go to the farmers market every week.
- b. I go to the farmers market sometimes. Maybe once a month.
- c. I don't know of any farmers markets but I am interested in going!
- d. Never. I am not really interested in starting.

5. How much of your own food do you grow?

- a. I grow lots of my own food! I have a garden or a farm.
- b. I grow some food. I have a few plants in my yard or window garden.
- c. I don't have a garden but I would like to grow some food.
- d. I have never grown any food. Ehh. Not that interested.

6. Do you try to eat food that is in season?

- a. Yes, I only eat food that is in season.
- b. Sometimes if I remember.
- c. I don't know what food is in season when, but I would like to learn.
- d. No, I eat what I want when I want

7. How often do you eat home-cooked food?

- a. I eat home-cooked food almost every night.
- b. I eat home-cooked food 3-5 times a week.
- c. I eat out a lot, but I would eat more home-cooked food if I knew how.
- d. I never eat home-cooked food.

8. Do you try to buy fruit and vegetables that were grown locally or in your state?

- a. I always check to see where my food is grown. If it isn't grown locally, I don't buy it.
- b. I try to buy locally grown fruits and vegetables usually but not always.
- c. I never thought about where my food was grown. I will try to eat more local food.
- d. I don't care where my food comes from.

- 1 point for every **a** answer
- 2 points for every **b** answer
- 3 points for every **c** answer
- 5 points for every **d** answer

Your Score

8-14 Congratulations, you have awesome eating habits! Your next challenge: work to make sure ALL people have access to healthy, affordable food.

15-24 Not too bad. Seems like you have some good eating habits and aspire to have even better ones. 10-24 acres are used to support your food habits. Unfortunately we would still need at least one more planet to support your consumption.

25-32 Yikes, big foot! It seems some of your habits are damaging to the environment. 24-40 acres are used to support your food habits. We would need 3-4 more planets to sustain your life style into the future.

* Activity used with permission. What's On Your Plate? Project. DVD, book, online games, & curriculum can be found at <http://www.whatsonyourplateproject.org/>. Produced by Aubin Pictures www.aubinpictures.com in collaboration with Solar One. To view other Solar One curricula please visit <http://www.thegreendesignlab.org/>

UNDERSTANDING BEVERAGE CHOICES

Key Messages

Water is an essential nutrient.

All drinks are not equal in nutritional content.

Background

Your body is made up of 60% water, so it's not surprising that the most important beverage to drink is water. In order for our body to function at its best, we should drink 8-12 glasses of water per day. There are creative ways to increase your water consumption. You can bring variety to the water you consume by drinking sparkling water or adding flavored powders. Sparkling water can be purchased at the store and is a good substitute when you're craving something bubbly. You can also purchase water flavorings that are either liquid drops or powder packets. These tend to be low in calories and add taste to simple water. Another option is to add fruit or fresh herbs, such as mint leaves, mixed berries, watermelon, pineapple, oranges, lemons, or limes.

Beverages such as milk have various types. Milk is sold as skim, 1%, 2% and whole milk. The percentages indicate the amount of fat in the milk. These beverages also pack in essential nutrients that your body needs.

Tea and coffee are inexpensive, nice alternatives when served plain. They're loaded with antioxidants that can help remove harmful chemicals from our bodies. On the other hand, tea and coffee with added sugar and cream can add many empty calories, sometimes more than 500 calories per drink.

Sports drinks have carbohydrates, minerals and electrolytes. They also have added coloring and flavoring such as high fructose corn syrup. They're meant to replace water and electrolytes lost during fitness activities. They can be helpful to athletes who are doing intense exercise, but be aware that they are not replacements for the water your body needs on a regular basis.

We may think that low-calorie or diet drinks have nutritional benefits. Diet sodas or other diet drinks might be advertised as being enticing choices. However, these alternatives can actually have negative effects on your body. Diet drinks are loaded with artificial sweeteners. Some studies say they might actually lead to weight gain and other body changes. Be aware of the claims that companies make about the health of their products. Read your labels. As a general rule, if you can't understand the ingredients in a drink, it might be filled with chemicals instead of essential nutrients.

Drinks such as soda, fruit drinks, and energy drinks have high sugar content and added chemicals. They aren't nutrient dense with vitamins and minerals. Many of the energy drinks and sodas also have high amounts of caffeine. Excess amounts of these drinks can actually lead to dehydration rather than providing the body with the water needed for proper functioning. It's important to drink as much water as we can and keep the drinks with high sugar, caffeine and empty calories in moderation.

UNDERSTANDING BEVERAGE CHOICES

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: GOT SUGAR?

TIME

5-10 minutes

MATERIALS

**Sugar cubes
Bowls or plastic bags
Drink labels**

Activity Description:

- This can be done as a demonstration or participants can measure out the sugar.
- Ask individuals to figure out how much sugar is in the whole bottle (most bottles have more than one serving). Multiply the grams of sugar by the number of servings. Sugar g x servings = total grams of sugar.
- Have participants measure out the sugar cubes for a visual of how much added sugar is in the drink. 1 cube of sugar = 3 grams.
- Groups can share their results in a short presentation and discuss. Below is a short powerpoint from CNN that shows how much sugar is in some popular beverages.

Coach's Notes

Sweet comparisons: How much sugar is in that drink?

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/07/02/health/gallery/sugar-sweetened-beverages/>

Another option is to measure out the sugar beforehand and discuss as a group.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WHAT'S IN MY DRINK?

TIME

15-20 minutes

MATERIALS

Nutrition Labels for a variety of drinks

Activity Description:

Print out the nutrition labels for a variety of drinks. Be sure to include popular ones that you know participants enjoy drinking.

- Energy drinks
- Soda
- Diet soda or other drinks
- Fruit juices
- Milk
- Sports drinks
- Protein drinks
- Yogurt shakes
-

Go through each label and look at ingredients, sugar content, vitamins and minerals, etc. Discuss which options are better drink options for nutrition.

Coach's Notes

Be sure to discuss some of the marketing messages such as low fat or diet, and compare the ingredient labels. Ingredients are listed from most to least.

CAFFEINE

Key Messages

Caffeine is a drug and not a nutrient.
I will explore caffeine levels in a variety of drinks.

Background

Caffeine is a naturally occurring substance in plants, but it can also be a man-made substance added to our foods and drinks. The recommended limit for adults is approximately 400 milligrams or less of caffeine per day. This equates to four cups of coffee, ten cans of soda, or two energy shot drinks. Note that soda and energy drinks can have a wide range of caffeine levels. This information is on the label. Caffeine can also be found in tea, cocoa, chocolate, fruits and leaves. Caffeine has no nutritional value. It acts as a stimulant to the central nervous system. It can increase alertness and is commonly used to stay awake. Consuming caffeine on a regular basis can lead to increased tolerance or even addiction. A person is addicted to caffeine when he or she cannot function normally (awake in the morning) without it. A person who is addicted may have adverse side effects when caffeine is not available. Side effects such as headaches, irritability and nervousness are the most common. Caffeine tolerance leads people to consume more than the recommended amount of caffeine to prevent the adverse symptoms listed above. A person using caffeine for alertness will notice that over time, they need a larger amount in order to stay alert.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: ENERGY DRINKS

TIME

10-15 minutes

MATERIALS

Labels from a variety of energy drinks
Copies of the caffeine chart for all participants
Pen/pencil

Activity Description

Ask the participants what they know about energy drinks.

Define energy drinks (show an example)

- Energy drinks: Beverages that have similar ingredients as sports drinks but also have caffeine and guarana, which are stimulants. These drinks often have more caffeine per serving than other beverages. This can increase the chance of consuming more than 400 mg. This can be dangerous and potentially have lasting harmful effects.

Ask the participants if they can name any other energy drinks.

Bring in a several energy and sports drinks or have participants bring\ in some that they like.

- Red Bull
- Rockstar
- Monster
- Aspire



CAFFEINE

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: ENERGY DRINKS CONTINUED

In small groups, have participants look at the various drink bottles or pictures of labels.

Look at the content of caffeine. Determine the amount of caffeine in the bottle, taking the serving size into consideration (caffeine mg x servings). Write down answers on the caffeine chart.

Compare the caffeine levels to the 400 mg daily recommended limit.

Discuss the results. Which drinks had the most caffeine? How safe do you think these products are to use? Are there better choices?

Coach's Notes

Caffeine side effects include increased heart rate, high blood pressure, difficulty sleeping, anxiety and nervousness. Withdrawal side effects include headaches, fatigue, decreased alertness, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and muscle pain and stiffness. Energy drinks and sports drinks are also very acidic and can damage the enamel of teeth.

For more information about caffeine: <http://www.healthpoweredkids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Energy-Drinks-Updated-222939.pdf>

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WARNING: CAFFEINE!

TIME

15-20 minutes

MATERIALS

Label warning from tobacco and alcohol product
Markers
Paper
Pen

Activity Description:

- Show the warning labels that are on all tobacco and alcohol products.
- Discuss how alcohol and nicotine are considered drugs. Many people believe there should be warning labels on energy drinks, because caffeine is a drug.
- In small groups, have the participants develop and design what they think would be a good warning label for products with caffeine. What should that label look like?
- Have groups share their label and discuss.

Coach's Notes

For more information about caffeine and energy drinks:

Energy Drinks: What You Need to Know

<http://www.healthpoweredkids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Energy-Drinks-Updated-222939.pdf>

Caffeine Content of Drinks

<https://www.caffeineinformer.com/the-caffeine-database>

PHYSICAL WELLNESS

An important aspect of wellness is being able to move your body with strength and endurance. **Physical wellness** is much more than just exercise. Physical wellness is anything and everything having to do with your body. In this pillar we will explore many topics that are important for your body, all being a part of physical wellness.

With movement and exercise, it's important that we explore a variety of movements. Variety helps us maintain interest; there is nothing worse than forcing ourselves to be active in ways we don't enjoy.

A comprehensive program should include activities in four categories: balance, strength, cardiovascular fitness and flexibility. Find movements in each of these categories that you enjoy. Finding ways of moving that you especially like will help you get moving consistently. If you enjoy an exercise or physical activity, you'll be more likely to continue it.

LESSONS IN PHYSICAL WELLNESS

Balance in Physical Wellness
Taking Care of My Body
Alternative Fitness Options
Cardiovascular Endurance
Flexibility
Muscular Strength and Endurance
Movement at School or Work
Sleep
Dealing with Illness

Physical Wellness Simplified

While the human body is an amazingly complex and well organized biosystem, the vast majority of people who want to increase their Physical Wellness don't have to know everything about how it works! Unfortunately, many fitness professionals and supplement companies take it upon themselves to overcomplicate and obscure what a person needs to do to have a healthy, happy life. The following guidelines are an attempt to clarify and help a person recalibrate what is important for a physically healthy lifestyle, and are not meant to be followed as an end all approach to becoming physically fit. That said, these ideas will get you going in the right direction!

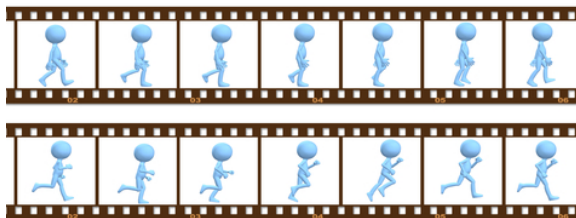
Remember – with wellness, everything works together, and as a result, affects other aspects of fitness. For example, you may find that a lack of drinking water makes it harder to fall and stay asleep or eating poorly will affect your energy levels. Once a person starts paying attention to what they're doing and how actions affect other aspects of their wellness, they can begin to make healthier choices!

For simplicity's sake, break Physical Wellness into four groups (below) and do your best in each group, each day. Make a modest, attainable goal for each group, achieve that goal and move right along to something more challenging!

Water:

One of the simplest, most important things a person can do is drink more water! Water is a hugely important and impactful part of being physically well and it literally affects all other parts of fitness, from how the brain functions right down to digestion. A couple of guidelines:

- Drink a glass of water when you wake up and before bed – you'll start the day with a simple, healthy habit and will find you sleep better.
- Drink a glass of water with every meal.
- On hot days or days you sweat a lot (from training, of course!), make sure you drink even more water than usual.
- Your urine should be clear or slightly colored (you'll have to get up and head to the bathroom more often – bonus movement!)



Movement:

The next easiest factor to control! This does not mean workout every day – most people do not need this level of fitness to be healthy. In fact, if the other factors of Physical Wellness are lacking, it may not be healthy to hit a hard training session. Being active can mean going for a walk, weight training, playing a sport, or cleaning the house! Be on your feet if you can. General guidelines include:

- Train with resistance at least two times per week – either use bodyweight or a form of weight lifting.
- Walk as much as possible. (If you have a movement tracker, try and get as many steps as you can in a day.)
- Get your heart rate up in bursts of 10-30 minutes, two – three times per week.
- Make movement as enjoyable as possible – find an activity you enjoy, not dread.

Nutrition:

Our third category for Physical Wellness is nutrition. This is the category people often get the most hung up on, so let's make it simple (for a meal):

- First, eat green and colorful food such as fruits and vegetables in good quantity (1-2 cups or as much as you want in excess of this) with every meal.
- Then eat about 20 grams of a good source of protein (meat, fish, eggs) with each meal. This is healthy, slows down blood sugar spikes, and promotes satiety (that full feeling).
- Lastly, if you're still hungry after eating for around 20 minutes, go ahead and eat a moderate amount of carbs (rice, pasta, bread). Moderate means pay attention to servings and strive for just one. For example, a serving size of rice is usually 1/4 cup. You'll be less bloated, have more energy, and feel stronger and more lively.
- An example meal for breakfast: 2-4 eggs scrambled with a cup of spinach, half cup of minced onion, and half cup of minced green pepper. If you're not satisfied, make a piece of toast with peanut butter.



Sleep:

That great mysterious part of wellness is about to be demystified! Sleep is a very important, almost always overlooked component of wellness that is also one of the most crucial.

- Strive to sleep more than eight hours per night, if possible.
- Short naps during the day are absolutely fine, provided you wake up refreshed and not groggy. If groggy, shorten the nap.
- Sleep is when our body repairs damage done by our environment and activity level. Remember, stressing the body with exercise is good, but only if you give it resources to heal!
- If you have chronic issues with sleeping, take the appropriate measures to figure it out and get enough sleep. You will feel better, be happier, think better, and perform like a **champion!**

It's important to note as well that individuals are unique by definition, so not all guidelines are great for all people! Try things and see what works for you. If you can make small goals in each of these categories, awesome! A great idea is to pick the one you struggle with the most and make that your focus for a month, then work on another the following month. **For example:**

- For the first month: "I'm going to go to bed a half hour earlier than usual five nights per week."
- For the second month: "I'm going to drink water in the morning and evening, with every meal every day this month."
- If you do this for a year, you've devoted three months to each category and I bet you'll be fitter and happier!

Importance of Sleep

Sleep is a vital component of good health; it helps both your body and mind to function at their optimal level during the day. Sleep can improve your physical health by maintaining hormone levels that make you full/hungry, support growth and development and repair your muscles. Similarly, a good night’s sleep can improve your brain function and allow you to pay attention, make decisions, learn quickly and be creative.

As we age, the amount of sleep your body needs changes. For example, a newborn baby will sleep 16-18 hours per day whereas an adult should get about 7-8 hours of sleep per day.

Age	Recommended Amount of Sleep
Newborns	16–18 hours a day
Preschool-aged children	11–12 hours a day
School-aged children	At least 10 hours a day
Teens	9–10 hours a day
Adults (including the elderly)	7–8 hours a day

Some people have difficulties with falling asleep and/or staying asleep. One of the best ways to improve quality of sleep is to have a consistent schedule; going to bed and waking up around the same time each day, including weekends. Your body likes predictability and having a stable sleeping routine will help your body to relax at the end of each day. Additionally, take the hour before you go to bed for quiet time by avoiding exercise, TV/computer screen and eating large meals. Following these simple guidelines will help you to feel more rested in the morning.

Feeling Sleepy:

Some people often feel “sleepy,” falling asleep while watching TV or while eating lunch. This could be due to sleep deficiency or a sleep disorder. Many individuals deal with sleepiness by taking a nap. However, a nap does not provide all of the benefits of a good night of sleep. It is recommended that naps are limited, but if necessary a nap should be taken earlier in the afternoon and for an adult should not last more than 20 minutes.

If despite sleeping well at night you still feel tired throughout the day, then consider visiting a doctor. The doctor will likely recommend that you keep a sleep diary to track when you are sleeping and for how long. The doctor may also recommend that you have a sleep study to further assess the situation.



Obstructive Sleep Apnea:

The most common sleeping disorder is Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA). OSA is typically characterized by repetitive episodes of snoring followed by long pauses in breath (called apnea), typically lasting 20-40 seconds. One may experience these symptoms for years before the diagnosis is made. OSA can be temporarily caused by an upper respiratory infection but can also be a chronic condition. In adults, individuals with OSA often also suffer from obesity. Losing weight can help to resolve the condition. There are many common symptoms associated with OSA such as sleepiness, loud snoring and restless sleep. Once a patient visits their doctor with the common symptoms, a sleep study conducted before the diagnosis of sleep apnea is made. If someone is diagnosed with sleep apnea, it is treated with a machine called CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure). CPAP helps to prevent episodes of apnea by pushing oxygen into the individual's lungs.



Adding Resistance Training to Your Routine

As a trainer, two of the most common excuses for why people don't exercise is that they "don't have time" and "don't have the money" to do so. While it's good to be busy (work over full time, run a business and be involved in several community endeavors) the excuse of not having time to train does not hold water. Some days you do not train, aside from walking briskly around when completing tasks, and other days you can only commit very little time to it. The following paragraphs will provide some reasons to train despite 'not having time' as well as some ideas on how to fit it in between your obligations.

A major issue to overcome is the idea that unless you spend at least an hour or more on a 'fitness session' it was not worthwhile. The more active you become, the more you may realize that this is untrue. Granted, if you can spend an hour getting in a good warm up, some mobility work, strength training, interval training and more mobility work/cool down, great – this is ideal! That is simply not feasible for many of us, at least not every day. The fact is, if you can even find time to do one set of push-ups, walk further from your car to your errand of choice, choose the stairs instead of the elevator, bike to work instead of drive or 'superset' exercises in with housework, you're doing great! A properly done push-up is a push-up, and is beneficial to your body no matter how you slice it.

The idea here is how to live an active, healthy lifestyle and fit specific movements into this lifestyle to help ensure a long, healthy life. In the title of this work, the term "resistance training" instead of "weights" is used intentionally. Resistance training can be anything from using weights, to exercise bands, to your own bodyweight! As long as there's something resisting your movement (even gravity) it counts. Lying on the floor is not resistance training, but getting up from the floor is – extra bonus if you've chosen to get up from the floor holding something heavy!

Helpful Ideas:

- When you can devote a chunk of time (10-60 minutes) to exercise:
 - Go for a walk – every five minutes, stop and do a set of push-ups/squats, jumping jacks, burpees... anything using your bodyweight!
 - Similar idea – on your walk, make a pact with yourself to run or walk briskly up every hill you encounter.
- When you have "too much to do" to exercise:
 - Carry your purchase out of the store instead of using the cart.
 - Do push-ups/squats/jumping jacks at your house as you clean (a set of push-ups only takes about 20 seconds). Mixing fitness in with your chores helps get both things accomplished and breaks up the act of cleaning.
 - If you must watch TV, move on the commercial breaks. **Challenge:** try to do 5-15 push-ups each commercial or alternate between push-ups and squats!
 - Use cans, jugs of water/milk, bags of sand, etc. as weights at home.
 - When mowing the lawn or doing yard work, try to make it physically harder than it has to be.

Clearly, these are just a few ideas to get you thinking creatively about living a more active lifestyle. People often forget that while exercise is **very** important, it is still only something you do for a small portion of the day. If you don't live an active lifestyle, it's far more important you start doing so for your health than to start a hard core regimented workout program designed by an expensive trainer. While you may get faster results from the program (assuming you stick with it), there are many things you can start doing during your day to make changes for the better.

The decision to start living actively is one that is "putting money in the bank" for your health and wellness, and will benefit you directly and those you care about indirectly (they get to have a healthier, happier you in their lives.) It's recommended that people try to dedicate a few hours a week to their fitness and themselves when they can, but the above ideas are a great place to start! Consider that fitness and activities are a time just for you and have myriad mental and social benefits, as well as physical. As stress levels fall and you have more energy, you will become more productive, and be able to do more with the little time you have. The more active you are, the more productive you can be, and suddenly, before you know it, you'll have more time to do the things you enjoy with the people you care about!

Importance of Varying Workouts

To understand why it's important to vary your training sessions, it's first necessary to understand how the human body works. The body is designed to adapt to whatever it does the most. In other words, to become efficient at that movement or activity. Over time, we've become very good at specializing – the body changes to make the most of what it's getting, even if that includes sitting in a chair for hours each day. The body doesn't know what is good or bad for it, it just responds to stimulus in the environment. If you sit all day, the body will become good at sitting! If you do push-ups all day, the body will become good at push-ups. This is a very good and necessary adaptation, and something we have to take into account with our daily lives.

It's pretty obvious why becoming good at sitting is not healthy – the body becomes weaker as it is supported by a chair or couch because it does not have to support itself. Some parts stretch out, others tighten up and we end up an unnatural mess! Our posture suffers and we lose movement quality because of it.

What most people don't realize is doing too many push-ups without varying our training can be bad for us as well. If we train one part of the body much more than another, suddenly our bodies become very good at that one thing, and strong in only one way, but are not balanced or healthy. A healthy body is balanced and works together to perform the activities that we want to do. If we just trained our front, and not our back, the strength of our chest will pull our shoulders forward and stretch out our back, because it is not strong enough to combat the chest muscles. This happens with all parts of the body – legs, stomach, neck and arms.

Balance is Key:

The best way to combat this is to make sure your training is balanced – when you work your chest, be sure to work your back. Large movements like squats are balanced by themselves and work most of the core. Too much of any one exercise will lead to dysfunction in another area. For high level athletes who have short careers this can be considered ok, as it is a choice they have made. For most of us who just want to live a long, healthy life, we need balance.

Another aspect of varying workouts is to completely change up what you are doing periodically for the first reason mentioned above – specialization and efficiency. If you run every day, you'll become better at running. At first, the body has to work very hard to adapt to the new activity. Your muscles, ligaments, tendons, and cardiovascular and nervous systems are all working hard to try and do the activity. The more you run, the easier it gets. The easier running becomes on your body, or the more efficient you become, the less energy you have to use, and the fewer calories you'll burn. If weight loss is your goal, burning fewer calories for the same exercise is the opposite of what you want! When you change your exercise program (more reps, harder exercises, less rest, longer sets, etc.) you make your body continually work hard to adapt to new stimuli, and once again make improvements in your fitness.



It's important to note that this can change based on what your goals are, but to be an overall healthy human being, a holistic approach to movement and activity should be employed. Another benefit to adding diversity to your workouts is that it will keep activity interesting! We have a wonderful opportunity in Minnesota to change things with the seasons – is it any wonder why Minnesota is ranked in the top few healthiest states in the country year after

year? Swim and bike in the summer, hike and jog to see the fall leaves, snowshoe and ski in the winter, and get back out there in the Spring to enjoy the beautiful weather by walking or starting to bike once again!



Exercises at Work or School

No time to exercise? Here is your solution! For the workers, you sit at a desk for at least eight hours a day. For the students, you sit in class or at your favorite study spot doing homework for most of the day. Why not spend a little time working and stretching your muscles during the hours of sitting? Researchers have found that exercising at the office, during class, or while studying for the next upcoming exam can increase productivity, concentration, and enthusiasm! You may not be spending an hour in the gym lifting weights and doing cardio, but a couple exercises every hour or two can make a lot of difference for you and your employer. If being more productive and enthusiastic doesn't motivate you, think about your health. Sedentary office workers and inactive people have been reported to be at higher risk of cardiovascular disease because of increased levels of insulin, glucose, and triglycerides.

Now let me show you some examples of exercises that can be done anywhere – an office desk, in the classroom, or sitting around doing homework.

- Shoulder shrugs – shrug your shoulders and hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 10-15 times.
- Glute squeeze – when you're sitting down, squeeze your glute muscles and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 10-15 times or for as many times as you want.
- Walking – instead of sending an e-mail or calling the person a couple cubicles down, walk over and chat with them. Instead of taking the bus to class, leave a few minutes early and walk!
- Have good posture – sit up tall, shoulders back, and activate your core muscles. Try sitting with good posture for 5-10 minutes and you'll feel the burn!
- Leg lifts – kick your leg out until it's straight, hold for 3 seconds, and relax. Repeat for each leg 10-15 times.
- Calf raises – while you're waiting in the lunch line or waiting for your food to heat up, do single leg or double leg calf raises.

These subtle and simple exercises are too easy not to try at work or during class! You'll be on the fast track to being more productive and pleasant to be around at the office or at school. Don't forget to always drink plenty of water and try to choose healthier food options!



Alternative Fitness Options

Movement is a big part of being a fit person! There are many ways to move aside from “working out,” and they all count toward being healthy. While some of them are better for certain goals (flexibility, weight loss, getting stronger) it is important to ‘mix it up’ sometimes and keep things fresh and fun. Below are some ideas for active things to do that are outside the traditional idea of lifting weights or running.

Yoga

Yoga is an ancient system of movement much like a martial art. It has become very popular in the United States, though it began in Asia. Typically, Yoga moves flow from one into another, and form a type of activity that is fantastic for strengthening the body and helping create great posture, better movement, and overall high levels of health. Yoga can be done as a group, with a partner, or even by yourself. There are many types of Yoga, so one is sure to fit your personality! You can find Yoga videos on youtube.com as well as in DVD form. If working with a group is something you enjoy, most fitness facilities have classes, or find your neighborhood Yoga studio!

Hiking

Hiking is taking a walk in a wilderness area, usually with a destination in mind. People often hike to something like a water fall, hill top, cave, or some other natural or historical feature in the wilderness. Some hikes can be fast – even a couple minutes over short distances, whereas other hikes can last a very long time. A long hike is usually called backpacking and can last anywhere from a couple days to several months! Hiking is a great way to enjoy the outdoors on a beautiful day, learn about the area, and burn calories while strengthening the legs. Make sure you are wearing good shoes to go hiking – oftentimes boots are safer due to increased ankle support and soles that grip the ground better than tennis shoes.

Rock Climbing

Not for the faint of heart! Rock climbing is becoming more and more popular in recent years. There are a few types of rock climbing. The easiest type is called ‘bouldering,’ and can be done without special gear, though a helmet is always recommended. Bouldering is climbing on terrain that is not high above the ground – usually just a few feet, so if you fall off you simply jump down to the ground! The next level is rock climbing with a rope and harness. This requires more people to be involved to help make sure you don’t fall. You tie onto a rope and climb up a taller cliff while someone holds the rope. This is the most popular type of rock climbing, and there are many different places to do it, even some that are indoors!

Canoeing/Kayaking

In the great state of Minnesota we have no lack of opportunities to be on the water. In other areas of the country this one could be more difficult, but in the state of 10,000 lakes (we actually have over 15,000)



there are many places to rent a canoe or kayak if you don't have one yourself. Make sure if you choose to use this form of exercise that you go with someone who is experienced and you use all the safety precautions. These include knowing the water you'll be on and where to enter/exit the water, checking the weather before you go, having some knowledge of how to paddle, and always wearing a life jacket. Life jackets are important even if you are a good swimmer in case you get hurt and cannot swim as well as usual. This kind of activity can be very intense or slower paced, go with what you want!

Biking

Biking is a fantastic sport. Similar to canoeing, it is very accessible to most people, but safety precautions have to be taken seriously. Biking is the most dangerous activity you can do, because oftentimes bikes use the same area as vehicles. If you can bike on a path, it is much safer! Always wear a helmet when biking, and watch out for other people and vehicles. Biking is a great way to get cardiovascular activity, and also strengthen the legs!

Swimming

Swimming is a full body workout that also includes cardiovascular endurance. Swimming can vary from simply playing in the water to swimming a long ways at once. It is ideal for people who have trouble walking or running, or have trouble with their joints. Swimming can help strengthen all the muscles in the body, and is considered one of the best exercises to rehabilitate from an injury, illness, or chronic weakness. One barrier to swimming is to find a place to do so – in the summer in Minnesota it can be done for free at many of the lakes, but in the winter it has to be done indoors, and sometimes there may be a small fee associated with it. It is always a good idea to swim with a partner for safety and fun!

Yard/House Work

While many consider yard work/house work not as much fun as other activities, these things still have to be done, so why not make the best of it! Yard work can be very physically demanding, whether you are digging a garden, raking leaves, mowing the grass, or painting a fence! Housework can also be good exercise, from stretching to dust the top of a book case to pushing and pulling a vacuum around, to carrying laundry up or down stairs. Count these activities when you're considering how much activity you get in a day! A fun way to break things up is to do an activity, then do some pushups/sit-ups/squats, then another activity, and continue until all your housework/yardwork is complete. You've done your chores and gotten in a good workout!

These are just a few ideas about alternative options to what most people consider traditional fitness, i.e. lifting weights or going for a jog. Feel free to brain storm up some of your own! Anything movement related that you enjoy can be part of your fitness regiment, and is a great way to keep active without things becoming stagnant or boring. Go out, move, and enjoy life!

Ben Swarts



Prehab Exercises – Help Prevent Injury

Prehabilitation exercises are done to try and reduce the risk of injury. These exercises are important for everyone, especially athletes or very active people. Activity is great, but it also increases your risk of injury if not done properly. These exercises strengthen the muscles that aren't directly used but help support key muscles in daily or physical activities. For example, many people have low back pain when doing physical activity or standing for long periods of time. A prehab exercise that would help with that is core strengthening exercises. For example, 30 second planks or modified planks are a great way to strengthen your core muscles! Having stronger abdominal muscles helps take the load off your lower back and give you better posture throughout the day.

Most prehab exercises strengthen vulnerable areas like your hips, core, and shoulders. These muscles allow you to improve your posture and alignment and are also muscles that help support your back and shoulder rotators muscles. It is recommended to do prehab exercises between two to six times a week.

Some prehabilitation exercises that can be done to help your upper body are:

- Front plank or side planks
- Shoulder stretches
- Wall push-ups
- Squeezing your shoulders together
- Laying on your stomach and lifting your arms in the shape of a "Y" or "T"

Some prehabilitation exercises that can be done to help your lower body are:

- Ankle circles or pointing/flexing your feet
- Toe raises
- Butterfly stretch
- Glute bridge
- Butterfly stretch

These exercises don't need any added weights or resistance. You can pick 4-5 exercises and do one set of 10-15 repetitions. Five minutes a day or every couple days is all it takes to help reduce the risk of injury! If you don't know what some of these exercises are or want more options, there are more of these stretches/exercises that can be found in the Fitness Guide or Injury Prevention section!



Relaxation

- Stress, working out, and many other things can definitely take a toll on your body and be detrimental to your mind as well.
- It's important to be able to take a step back from everything and relax.
- Although sitting down and watching TV or playing on the computer might be great after a long day, there are healthier options that can help replenish our minds and bodies more than just looking at a screen.

Exercise to Let Off Steam and Relax Your Mind and Body:

- Yoga is a popular way to help you stabilize both your mind and body.
- In a relaxing setting, you can find your own focus and flexibility and improve your mental and physical strength.
- A simple stretch is a great way to relieve muscle tension and can be a quick fix during a work day.
- An easy run or walk is a quick way to activate good brain chemicals.



Meditate and Focus on Your Own Inner Peace:

- Find a comfortable spot in a quiet place, concentrate on deep breathing, and simply unwind for at least five minutes.
 - This lets all your tension leave your body and is a good way to clear your mind and relax.
- Another good way to clear your head is to switch up your environment and be alone.
 - Taking a break in a quiet room or heading outside in the sun is a good place to self-reflect and collect your thoughts.
- Meditation can also be a period of self-reflection.
 - A good way to do this is to write in a journal.
 - You can write about what may be stressing you out and how you can work on fixing it, or write about all the great things in your life that are more important than all of these other stressors.
- You could also paint or draw to relieve stress and express yourself through art.



Socialize to Talk Out Your Issues and Connect With Others:

- Talking to friends or going on an adventure with them is a great way to unwind and connect with someone else. They might need to relax just as much as you do!
- Not a huge people person? After a rough day, snuggling with a pet is always a great option as well.
- You know yourself better than anyone else and it's up to you to determine the best way for you to relax.
- Each person has a different way of relaxing and these are just some ideas to get you started.
- Find an activity that best helps you and go for it!



SOfit

SPECIAL OLYMPICS
WASHINGTON



Physical Wellness Activities

BALANCE IN PHYSICAL WELLNESS

Key Messages

Water, movement, nutrition and sleep are the four basics of physical wellness.

I can find balance in each basic area of physical wellness every day.

Background

The human body is a complex, yet well-organized system. Fortunately, we don't have to know everything about how it works in order to increase our physical wellness. Unfortunately, we get many mixed messages from a variety of professionals and wellness enthusiasts. This makes it difficult to decipher what we need to do to improve our overall physical wellness. The following guidelines will help to clarify and recalibrate what's important for improving and maintaining a physically active lifestyle.

"Wellness" is a broad term that includes all aspects of a balanced lifestyle. For example, you may find that a lack of drinking water makes it harder to fall and stay asleep. Not eating with balanced nutrition affects your energy levels. Once a person understands the links between the areas of physical wellness, he or she can begin to find a balance for themselves.

We'll look at four areas of physical wellness. Try and find balance in each area, every day. Consider creating an attainable goal for each area. Achieve that goal and move right along to the next challenge.

Water

One of the simplest, most important things a person can do is drink more water. Water is a vital part of being physically well, and it affects every system in the body. The digestive system needs water to process our food, and the brain needs water to think and remember. Below are several recommendations for drinking more water on a daily basis:

- Drink a glass of water when you wake up and before you go to bed. You'll start your day with a simple health habit, and you'll find you sleep better.
- Drink a glass of water at every meal.
- On hot days or on days you work out and sweat, make sure you drink even more water than usual.
- Urine should be clear or slightly yellowish in color. If the color is darker, we might not be drinking enough water.
- In general, drink 8-12 glasses of water per day, but more if you are sweating a lot.

BALANCE IN PHYSICAL WELLNESS

Movement

Movement doesn't mean that you have to exercise every day. Most people don't need this level of fitness to maintain balance in physical wellness. In fact, if the other areas of physical wellness are lacking, it may not be the best option to over exert yourself with exercise. Being active can mean going for a walk, strength training, playing a sport, or cleaning the house or gardening. General guidelines include:

- Train with resistance at least two times per week - either using body weight or a form of strength training with bands or weighted items around the house (milk jug, water bottle, etc.).
- Walk or move as much as possible. If you have a movement tracker, like a Fitbit, try to take as many steps as you can. Many recommendations encourage about 10,000 steps per day.
- Get your heart rate up for 10-30 minutes, 2-3 times per week.
- Make movement as enjoyable as possible. Find an activity you enjoy, as you'll be more likely to do it consistently.
- Take the stairs whenever possible.
- Park the car at the last parking spot when shopping. Or, ask to be dropped off at the bus stop before your regular stop to add a few more steps in your day.

Nutrition

Nutrition is the category many people get stressed out about, as it's easy to feel as if they aren't eating as balanced as they should. Here are some tips to get you started:

- Eat green and colorful foods such as fruits and vegetables in good quantity. Eat 1-2 cups (or as much as you want in excess of this) with every meal.
- Eat about 20 grams of a lean source of protein (poultry, fish, or eggs) with each meal. This will help control hunger and prevent your appetite from taking over.
- Choose whole grains for sandwiches or add a small portion of brown rice or pasta to meals. This will provide the essential nutrients as well as give you some long-term energy to get a workout in during the day.
- Eat breakfast. Give your metabolism a boost by eating lean protein (eggs), whole grains (oatmeal) or dairy (yogurt) and some fruits. Peanut butter on whole grain toast is also a great way to start the day.

Sleep

Sleep is an extremely important component of wellness. Here are some helpful tips to improve your sleep:

- Strive to go to bed at the same time every night. When your sleeping patterns become consistent, you feel more rested. It is recommended to get at least eight hours of sleep per night.
- Short naps of less than thirty minutes during the day can provide us with additional energy. If the naps lead to tired and sluggish feelings, try to shorten the duration.
- During sleep, our body repairs damage done by our environment and activity level. It's important to give our body that time to rest and heal.
- Sleep is when our brain processes what we learned during the day.
- Try to avoid empty calories such as sugar or caffeine in the afternoon. This will allow your body to relax and sleep.
- If you have difficulty sleeping, seek the help of your doctor. He or she may have other tips to consider.

It's important to note as well that individuals are unique by definition, so not all guidelines are perfect for all people. Try some of these tips and see what works for you.

BALANCE IN PHYSICAL WELLNESS

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: BALANCE IN PHYSICAL WELLNESS

TIME

20-30 minutes

MATERIALS

Paper
Colored pencils or markers

Activity Description

Have participants make seven columns on the blank sheet of paper and label them for each day of the week across the top.

Then, label time of day down the left side, from 6 a.m. to 6 a.m.

Have participants use the following color code to fill in their chart for the previous day. Encourage them to fill in the days for the rest of the week to see if there is balance in their physical wellness.

Green: *Eating whole grain, vegetable, or fruit*

Red: *Sleeping*

Orange: *Exercising or moving*

Blue: *Drinking water*

Discussion questions

How often are you eating a balanced diet?

How many hours between meals?

Why is it important not to skip a meal?

How much sleep are you getting?

How much water are you drinking? How much movement?

Coach's Notes

You can print out daily record or planner sheets online if you'd like to have them prepared ahead of time. This a great way for participants to have a visual of how well they are doing in the four areas of physical wellness.

TAKING CARE OF MY BODY

Key Messages

Taking care of my body helps me to look and feel my best.

Taking care of my body is my responsibility, but if I need help I can ask a trusted person in my life.

Background

Hygiene is an important part of your overall wellness, as it has to do with keeping your body neat and clean. Your hair, skin, and teeth need your care on a daily basis. As we get older, it's even more important to take care of our bodies, since this can prevent many infections. Every person has a responsibility to take care of his or her body. If there is something you need help with, it's important to think about who you can ask to help you. Here are a few tips to remember in keeping our bodies clean.

Washing Your Hands

Washing your hands is a simple way to keep clean throughout the day. By washing your hands, you get rid of dirty germs. This prevents you from getting sick or possibly making others sick. The best way to wash your hands is by following these three steps:

- Wet your hands with warm water.
- Rub soap in your hands for about 20 seconds (or sing "Happy Birthday" to yourself). Be sure to get between your fingers and onto your forearms.
- Rinse your hands with warm water and dry them using a towel or air dryer.

It is recommended to wash your hands before and after you eat, after you use the restroom, after you play with animals, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, or whenever you think your hands may have gotten some germs on them. Note: When coughing, a great strategy is to cough into your upper arm rather than into your hands. If you don't have soap and water, try using hand sanitizer. It's important not to use this on a regular basis, as it can dry out the hands and lead to roughness. This can lessen the protective barriers of the skin that are helpful in reducing infections.

Taking a Shower or Bath

Showering or taking a bath is how we can get the whole body clean. When bathing, use a wash rag and body soap to remove the dirt and germs from the day. Some people like to shower or bathe every day as part of their routine. The key is to have a routine and stick with it. As we get older, we release more sweat each day, so a shower can keep you fresh and clean. Some people prefer an every other day routine. That's fine, as you are the one who knows your body best. Like other body parts, our private body parts need to be cleaned and taken care of. Washing hair is not something that needs to be done with each shower. Sometimes, washing hair too much can lead to dryness in the scalp and itchiness. Use a good shampoo (and conditioner if you choose) when you wash your hair to keep your hair clean.

TAKING CARE OF MY BODY

Brushing Your Teeth

Brushing your teeth should be a priority two times a day: once when you wake up and then again before you go to bed. If you have a sticky snack that gets stuck in your teeth sometime during the day, it's important to brush an extra time. Make sure that you brush your teeth for two minutes (30 seconds on each quadrant of your mouth). A timer at the sink or an electric toothbrush with a built-in timer is a helpful way to make sure our teeth get the time they deserve. Brush all parts of your mouth: front teeth, back teeth, and even your tongue. Germs and leftover food can hide all over the mouth, so pay attention to brushing thoroughly. Brushing can also help keep breath fresh. Flossing between the teeth is also a good daily habit, since many foods can get stuck between our teeth. This can lead to cavities. Foods such as popcorn can become lodged, and only a good flossing will remove it. Flossing is important for your gums, because it prevents redness and infections such as gingivitis. Gingivitis is inflammation of the gums caused by bacteria buildup. By brushing and flossing daily, our gums and teeth will stay clean and healthy.

Proper hygiene is key to helping our bodies and teeth look and feel their best. Washing your hands is also part of the universal precautions for preventing disease transmission. Cleaning our bodies and teeth can prevent skin and gum infections from occurring. Create a routine. Your body and teeth will thank you.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WASHING YOUR HANDS

TIME
5 minutes

MATERIALS
Glitter
Vaseline (or something sticky and safe to use on skin)

Activity Description

Have participants put a small amount of Vaseline and glitter on their hands with a small brush.

Ask participants how this mixture could spread to other parts of the body and to other people. Examples of answers: *Touching the same doorknob, sneezing, coughing, rubbing eyes, sharing a glass, etc.*

Now have them wash their hands as they normally would. Some might use cold water, no soap or a very short wash.

Ask participants: Did you get all of the Vaseline and glitter off your hands? Discuss why not. Examples of answers: Used cold water, only for a few seconds, no soap, etc.

Optional to add more of the glitter or Vaseline, and now have participants wash hands using warm water and soap while singing "Happy Birthday" or counting to twenty while they are washing. Ask participants if this made a difference with removing all the glitter mixture? Discuss.

Coach's Notes

Have the glitter mixture premade in a little jar. If the glitter mixture is not available, you can still go through the steps and ask the questions about how germs are passed through air, water or touch. Then have them practice the proper way to wash their hands.

TAKING CARE OF MY BODY

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: HYGIENE JEOPARDY

TIME

15-30 minutes

MATERIALS

**Internet Capability
Computer
Optional- projector**

Activity Description

Search “Hygiene” in the browse section at www.jeopardylabs.com. There are several games about hygiene on this website. Choose one that seems to fit the group.

Split the group into two or three teams.

Take turns answering questions in the Jeopardy game.

Coach's Notes

Option can be to play the game as one large group to take out the competition.

ALTERNATIVE FITNESS OPTIONS

Key Messages

There are a variety of ways to get movement in your day.

I can explore a variety of activities in order to find something I enjoy doing for exercise.

Background

Movement is extremely important in maintaining physical fitness. We can move our bodies in many ways that may not even be considered exercise. Depending on the goals for your fitness (flexibility, weight control, or increasing strength), it's important to have variety and keep things fresh and fun. Below are some ideas for activities to do that are different from traditional exercise such as lifting weights or running.

Yoga

Yoga is an ancient system of movement much like a martial art (karate). It has become very popular in the United States and other countries around the world, though it began in Asia. Yoga is helpful for strengthening all aspects of the body through slow, smooth movements. Strengthening the core can lead to better posture and can lower the chance of back injuries. Yoga leaves your mind feeling energized and ready to face the challenges of a new day. Certain types of yoga focus on a gentle, restorative flow that can be relaxing at the end of a stressful day. Yoga can be done as a group, with a partner, or even by yourself. There are many types of yoga, so it's easy to find one that meets your goals. You can find yoga videos at [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) as well as in DVD form. If you enjoy working with a group, find your neighborhood yoga studio, or check out other local fitness facilities. Most have classes.

Hiking

Hiking is taking a walk in the wilderness or other natural environment, sometimes with a destination in mind. People often hike to a specific destination such as a waterfall, hilltop, cave, or some other natural or historical feature. Some hikes can be fast, just a few minutes over a short distance. Other hikes can last hours, or even days, and cover many miles. A long hike is usually called backpacking and can last anywhere from a couple days to several months. Hiking is a great way to get out and enjoy the outdoors on a beautiful day, learn about the area, and improve muscular strength and endurance. Be sure to wear shoes that have adequate grip when you go hiking. Boots are safer because they have better ankle support, and the soles grip the ground better than tennis shoes do. A hiking workout is a great way to strengthen the lower body muscles and improve endurance as well.

Rock Climbing

Rock climbing is not for everyone, but it can be a great challenge and has become popular across the world. You don't have to climb Mount Everest to get a workout. There are a few different types of rock climbing. The easiest type is called "bouldering" and can be done without special gear, though a helmet is always recommended. Bouldering is climbing on terrain that is not high above the ground, usually just a few feet, so if you happen to fall you can jump down to the ground. The next level is rock climbing with a rope and harness. This requires more people to be involved to help make sure you don't fall. You are attached to a rope and climb up a taller cliff while someone holds the rope. This is the most popular type of rock climbing and can be done both indoors at a center or outdoors in the wilderness.

ALTERNATIVE FITNESS OPTIONS

Canoeing and Kayaking

If you live close to a body of water, canoeing or kayaking can be a fun active experience. This is a great way to increase the muscular strength and endurance of the upper body. You may find a variety of places on a nearby lake or river where you can rent a canoe or a kayak if you don't own one yourself. If you choose this form of exercise, make sure you go with someone who is experienced and that you use safety precautions. If you're really interested in knowing more, consider taking a certification course to prepare you for canoeing and kayaking on all types of water. Never canoe or kayak by yourself. It's important to have someone with you in case of an emergency.

Biking

Biking has become one of the most popular activities around the globe. It's a wonderful way to work cardiovascular endurance as well as strengthen and increase the endurance of the lower legs. Biking is accessible to most people, but safety precautions have to be taken seriously. Always wear a helmet. Biking is one of the most dangerous activities, because it typically is done while sharing the road with vehicles. If you bike, try to find a path or side road where it's safe to bike. Mountain biking has also become very popular, and the same precautions of wearing a helmet apply. It's helpful to be familiar with the terrain when biking in backcountry hills or mountains, or go with an experienced mountain biker.

Swimming

Swimming is a full-body workout that develops cardiovascular endurance. Swimming can vary from simply playing in the water to swimming a long distance. This sport is ideal for people who have difficulty walking or running, or who have chronic joint pain. Because swimming is a total-body workout, it's regarded as one of the best activities to rehabilitate from injury, illness or chronic weakness. It's ideal to take lessons when learning to swim. Swimming should always be done with a partner for safety.

Yardwork or Housework

Yardwork may not always be fun, but why not let the body benefit from it. Yardwork can be physically demanding, whether you're digging a garden, raking leaves, mowing the grass, or painting a fence. Think about all the muscles you're using. Housework can also be good exercise, from stretching to dust the top of a bookcase to pushing and pulling a vacuum around, to carrying laundry up and down stairs. Include these activities when you're considering how much activity you get in a day. When cleaning the house, add a few squats, push ups or jumping jacks in between rooms.

These are just a few ideas about alternative options to what most people consider traditional fitness routines such as lifting weights or going for a jog. Feel free to brainstorm some ideas of your own. Anything movement related that you enjoy can be part of your fitness regimen, and is a great way to keep active without getting bored. Go out, move, and enjoy life!

ALTERNATIVE FITNESS OPTIONS

Suggested Activity: Yoga Class

TIME

30-60 minutes

MATERIALS

- **Yoga Video (from Youtube or DVD)**
- **Yoga mats or chairs**

Activity Description

As a group, participate in a yoga class.

If time, allow for discussion after the class.

Coach's Notes

Instead of using a video, consider bringing in a yoga teacher to teach a short yoga session to the group.

Cardiovascular Endurance

Key Messages

When building cardiovascular endurance, I can choose activities I enjoy.

I can improve the health of my heart, blood vessels, and lungs - this is cardiovascular fitness.

Background

To be cardiovascularly fit means improving and maintaining the health of your heart, blood vessels, and lungs. The way this can be measured is through routine tests at a doctor visit. Blood pressure and heart rate are typical key measures. Normal blood pressure should be 120/80 or lower. If it is higher than 140/90, your heart may be working too hard, and there could be some blockages in the arteries around your heart. Resting heart rate should be between 50-80. When you are cardiovascularly fit, your heart muscle is strong and is more efficient in getting oxygen and blood to all the working muscles of your body.

To be physically fit does not mean you have to go out and run ten miles. It means that you have the ability to perform your activities for daily living with relative ease and that you can maintain the health of areas of your body such as your brain, heart, lungs and muscles. It also means that you have a sense of balance in the mind, body and spiritual side of wellness. When you move your body, you are benefiting not only the physical aspects, but also the mental aspects, of your health. Daily movement can lead to a happier, healthier, more productive way of life.

The leading cause of death in the United States is heart-related disease. This includes atherosclerosis and high blood pressure from clogged arteries. A consistent program with movement and cardiovascular endurance helps strengthen the heart and also helps clear clogged arteries. If we can get our heart rate up a little bit, this will give it a good workout.

Examples of common cardio exercises include:

- Walk or run
- Hike
- Bike or use an arm cycle
- Rollerblade
- Jump rope
- Swim
- Canoe or kayak
- Anything you enjoy that gets your heart rate up

Cardiovascular Endurance

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: HEART RATE CHECK

TIME

5-10 minutes

MATERIALS

Clock or stopwatch

Activity Description

Instruct participants to check their resting heart rate for one minute in their neck or wrist. Make sure to give extra instruction on how to find the pulse. Remind participants that the resting heart rate should be between 50-80 for one minute.

Lead participants through a one-minute cardio activity such as jump roping, doing sit ups, running in place, etc.

Recheck heart rate for one minute.

Discussion questions:

What did you notice about your heart rate after one minute of cardio exercise?

What was happening to your heart during the cardiovascular exercise? Examples of answers: Blood pumping faster to get to working muscles, strengthening the heart muscle

Brainstorm some cardiovascular activities you can do throughout the day without any equipment.

Think of other activities you can do with equipment.

Reiterate that the heart is a muscle that needs to be exercised just like the rest of the muscles in the body. The only way to do that is to have bouts of activity in which the heart rate is increased from the resting state.

Coach's Notes

Discuss how the heart rate can be quickly checked. Six-second check and add a zero to the end.

Ten-second check and multiply by six.

Flexibility

Key Messages

Stretching is important and should be done every day.

Stretching can help prevent pain in our joints.

Background

Flexibility exercises such as stretching are often neglected. However, we need to make time to move our bodies through the full range of motion. This is arguably the most important aspect of any fitness program, because as we age, our joints become more prone to problems such as arthritis. Arthritis is a painful joint inflammation that can restrict our range of motion. Severe arthritis can prevent us from continuing activities we enjoy. Taking the time to ensure our joints go through their full range of motion can help decrease the impact of arthritis. This too will help us to continue activities of daily living throughout our lives.

The joints in our body are able to perform a variety of motions. Some joints bend in one direction (knee) or more directions (hip). Others rotate (shoulder). Pay attention to the natural bend of the joint when performing flexibility exercises. The joint should never be pushed into a painful motion. The following are stretches that should be performed on a regular basis. All stretches should be held a minimum of twenty seconds without bouncing.

Hamstring: Lie on back and straighten one leg. With your hands, gently pull it towards your head and feel a stretch in the back part of the upper leg. Repeat with opposite leg.

Quadricep: Stand straight and bend one of your knees. Grab your ankle below the knee with the hand on the same side of your body. Be sure to keep the knee pointing straight down to the floor. Feel a stretch on the front part of the upper leg. Repeat with opposite leg.

Calf: Stand close to a wall, facing it. Put one toe up on the wall and lean into the wall. Feel this stretch on the lower part of the back of the leg. Repeat with opposite leg.

Shoulders: Put one arm out straight from the body and then cross to the opposite side. Grab the arm with the opposite hand and pull gently. Feel the stretch on the outside of the shoulder. Repeat with opposite arm.

Chest: Stand in a doorway with goal post arms (arms straight out to sides with elbows bent and palms facing forward). Rest your forearms on either side of the doorway and take a step through the doorway. You should feel a gentle stretch across the chest.

Back: Lower to your hands and knees and gently sit back on your heels, keeping your arms stretched over your head. This is called "child's pose" in yoga. Feel the stretch in your lower back and also in your shoulder area.

Neck: Gently bring your ear to your relaxed shoulder, then chin to your chest, then other ear to the opposite shoulder. Be sure to hold each side at least twenty seconds. You should never feel pain or dizziness.

Flexibility

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: GET ACTIVE WITH FLEXIBILITY

TIME

10-12 minutes

MATERIALS

Posters about stretches or a stretch routine

Activity Description

Lead participants through a full-body flexibility program. As you are stretching various parts of the body, ask participants if they know which muscles are being stretched. Use the count of twenty for each stretch.

Define “Ballistic Stretching” (bouncing of the stretch) and ask participants why that is not a safe way to stretch. Examples of answers: *It can tear muscle fibers, over stretch and cause pain.*

Define “Static Stretching” (stationary holding of a stretch without bouncing.) Ask why this is a safe way to stretch. Examples of answers: *Able to get a deep, less painful stretch. Able to safely push muscle to full range of motion, gradual stretch that can be pushed as muscles relax and get more flexible.*

Allow for discussion after stretching routine if time.

Coach's Notes

As an option, consider using mats for these exercises. You can create your own stretching routine or find something online.

Muscular Strength and Endurance

Key Messages

Muscular strength and endurance exercises should be part of a balanced fitness program. It's important to work my muscles every day to keep them strong and moving.

Background

It's important for us to keep up with muscular strength and endurance. We can lose these important assets if we don't work on them daily. It is important to continue to keep the muscles strong and moving, ideally with some resistance.

Muscular strength is the amount of force your muscles can exert in one motion. The ability to lift a heavy box from the floor or to hold a heavy bag of groceries are examples of muscle strength.

Muscular endurance is the ability of a muscle or group of muscles to repeatedly exert force against resistance. For example, the muscle endurance of your legs allows you to walk a full flight of stairs or more without difficulty.

Here are some great tips to improve your muscular strength and endurance:

- Use the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park your car in the last spot to walk to the store.
- Perform 2 sets of 10 squats and heel raises while brushing your teeth in the morning and night.
- Carry the groceries to the car instead of using a cart.
- Rotate some core planks and push ups during commercial breaks of your favorite TV show.
- Lift something heavy like jugs of milk in a bicep curl for 2 sets of 10-20 repetitions.
- Attach resistance bands to door knobs at home for a variety of exercises for the shoulders, arms, chest and back.
- Join a local gym or community fitness center and ask a trainer at the facility to help you create a program for yourself.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: EASY RESISTANCE AT HOME

TIME

20-30 minutes

MATERIALS

Resistance bands of varying strengths
Chart of resistance band exercises
Copies of exercises for all participants

Activity Description

Lead participants through a series of upper body resistance exercises with 2 sets of 10-20 repetitions.

Coach's Notes

Search "resistance training band exercises" on the internet and you will find a number of charts to use. It will be helpful to make copies so participants can take them home. Make sure the chart comes from a respectable source and the exercises are safe for the general public.

Movement at Work or School

Key Messages

Even if I sit most of the day, I can stretch or bring movement into my day.

Movement throughout the work day or school day can help me to have more energy and get more work done.

Background

It's important to break up your work day or school day with movement. Some workers sit at a desk for at least eight hours a day. Many students sit in class or at a favorite studying spot doing homework for most of the day. Why not spend a little time working and stretching your muscles during the hours of sitting? Researchers have found that movement at the office, during class, or while studying can increase productivity, concentration, and enthusiasm for the task. You may not be spending an hour in the gym lifting weights or doing cardio, but a couple movements every hour or two can make a lot of difference for you and your ability to be productive. If being more productive and enthusiastic doesn't motivate you, think about your body's need to move after being sedentary for an extended time. Sedentary office workers and inactive people have been reported to be at higher risk of cardiovascular disease because of increased levels of insulin, glucose and fatty acids.

Here are some examples of movements that can be done anywhere- at a desk in an office, in the classroom, or at home while sitting around doing homework.

Shoulder Shrugs: Shrug your shoulders up and down. Use a rotating motion and pull the shoulder blades back and down together. Repeat 10-15 times. Hold for five seconds on the up phase and then another five seconds on the back and down phases for a good stretch of the neck muscles.

Glute Squeeze: When you're sitting down, squeeze your glute muscles and hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 10-15 times.

Walking: Instead of sending an e-mail or calling a person at work, walk over and talk to them. Instead of taking the bus to class, leave a few minutes early and walk.

Pelvic Tilts: While sitting, tighten glutes and shift hips forward, activating the lower abdominal muscles. Feel a stretch in the lower back and stability in the core muscles. Hold 5-10 seconds. Repeat 10- 15 times.

Focus on Posture: Sit up tall, shoulders back, and activate your core muscles. Try sitting with straight posture for 5-10 minutes to relieve pressure on the neck and shoulders.

Leg Lifts: Kick your leg out until it's straight, hold for 3-5 seconds, and relax. Repeat for each leg 10-15 times.

Calf Raises: When standing, raise your heels off the ground. This can be done while waiting in the lunch line or waiting for your food to heat up. Do single or double heel raises, 10-15 each or together.

Movement at Work or School

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: DESK EXERCISES

TIME

5-10 minutes

MATERIALS

Chairs for all participants

Activity Description

Do each of the above exercises as a group.

Have participants come up with additional exercises to be done from a chair and share with the group.

Coach's Notes

It may be helpful to find images online of stretches from the chair.

Sleep

Key Messages

Sleep is important and helps my body and mind to function at their best.
A sleeping routine will help me to fall asleep and stay asleep.

Background

Sleep is a vital component of physical wellness. It helps both your body and mind to function at their best during the day. The benefits of sleep include:

- Maintain hormone levels to help control hunger and appetite
- Support growth and development and repair muscle tissue
- Improve learning and recall of information (turning short-term memories into long-term)
- Improve attentiveness and concentration
- Clear the mind to make sound, positive decisions
- Increase creativity

As we age, the amount of sleep we need changes. For example, a newborn baby will sleep 16-18 hours each day, whereas an adult should get about eight hours of sleep each day.

REM (Rapid Eye Movement)

REM is the time in your sleep patterns when you are in the deepest sleep. The REM cycles usually happen about every 90 minutes throughout the night. This is when your body is totally relaxed and your mind is turning all the things you have learned during the day into long-term memories. This is also the time when most dreams take place. If you have a REM cycle just before you wake, you will most likely remember the dream from that cycle. The more REM cycles you have in the night, the better you feel and the more you will remember.

Some people have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep. It's important to keep bedtime and wake time consistent. For example, try to go to bed at the same time each night and wake at the same time each morning, including weekends. The body benefits from predictability. Having a stable sleeping routine will help your body relax at the end of each day. Additionally, it can be helpful to make the hour before you go to bed quiet by avoiding exercise, technology, and eating large meals. Following the above guidelines will help you feel more rested in the morning.

Feeling Sleepy?

Some people often feel "sleepy" during the day. They may fall asleep at unpredictable times, such as while watching TV or while eating lunch. This could be due to sleep deficiency or a sleep disorder such as insomnia. Insomnia is the inability to fall asleep.

Many individuals deal with sleepiness by taking a nap. However, a nap doesn't provide all the benefits of a good night's sleep. It's recommended that naps be limited, but if necessary, a nap should be taken earlier in the afternoon and should not last more than thirty minutes. Naps that are longer may make it difficult to sleep at night and can leave you feeling more tired than before the nap. It's also important to avoid caffeine and sugary foods beginning in the late afternoon. Caffeine and sugar tend to speed up body systems and can make it very difficult to relax at bedtime.

Sleep

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: CHANGING CHANNELS*

TIME

5-10 minutes

MATERIALS

Quiet music

Activity Description

- Allow participants to close their eyes and tell them to begin to think about what is on their minds. Then tell them they're going to practice changing the channel in their minds.
- Now ask them to change the channel by imagining themselves walking through a forest. "Imagine that you are stepping one foot in front of the other, walking through the forest. There are tall trees all around you."
- Keep them on that channel for thirty seconds or so, then have them change the channel to a sunny beach, imagining that they are lying on a towel with the sun shining on their face.
- Hold that image for thirty seconds or so, then change the channel. Do this four or five more times.
- Have participants open their eyes and come back to the group.
- After the activity, ask the group when this activity might be useful. Examples of answers: "When I'm worried," "When I have a nightmare," or "When I've seen a scary movie and I keep seeing the images over and over again."

Ideas for Channels

- At home on the couch, drinking a warm cup of cocoa
- Baking a batch of cookies and smelling them in the oven
- Swimming
- Being in a favorite place
- Holding a small pet
- Riding a bike
- Picking a bouquet of flowers

Coach's Notes

Option can be for participants to change the channel for the group. Another option is to ask the group which channels we should use. Shift from something frightening to something pleasurable and notice the responses in the body. It's helpful to include sensory details (scents, sounds, sights, tastes, and touch sensations) when asking individuals to imagine the channels.

* Activity adapted from *Yoga Calm for Children*, www.yogacalm.org and used with permission.

Dealing with Illness

Key Messages

- Illnesses can be caused by bacteria or viruses (germs).
- Illnesses can be spread through direct and indirect contact.
- It's important to rest when sick.

Background

At some point in our lives, we are bound to get sick. Sometimes it's a stuffy nose, a fever or a stomachache. How we handle our sickness can determine how long we stay sick. Our choices also affect others we might spread our sickness to. It's important to note that bacteria and viruses can be transmitted through direct contact (touching) and indirect contact (air). Here are some things to consider when you are not feeling well:

- If you think you are sick, you should tell someone and possibly go to the doctor for a check up. The doctor will know the best course of action in treating what ails you and help you feel better.
- Sometimes we don't need a trip to the doctor because our body can fight off the illness on its own. This is why we have an immune system. Illnesses such as food poisoning or the common cold are illnesses that we can handle on our own over time. However, if the symptoms aren't going away, then seek a doctor's help.
- When you're sick, be sure to cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Germs can spread through the air, and we don't want to make our loved ones sick. Carry around a package of tissue so you're prepared to catch those germs. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or upper arm. Coughing and sneezing into your hands is not recommended, as those germs can be easily spread to those around you.
- It's important to keep our body neat and clean. When you're sick, it's still important to continue your hygiene routine, even though you may not feel like it. Wash your hands often and especially after every cough or sneeze.
- Just as it's important to keep your body clean, it's also important to keep your surroundings clean. Disinfect things around you, such as cell phones, doorknobs, and electronic remote controls. This will kill germs and stop them from spreading. It's important to consider the other people in your house and protect them from the germs that made you sick.
- The most important thing to do when you're sick is to rest. This means getting as much rest and sleep as you can to help your body heal. Drink plenty of water to flush out the germs. It's also important to maintain balanced nutrition. Fruits and vegetables have antioxidants (infection fighting tools) to fight off the infection as well.

Listen to what your body needs. Don't push yourself to go beyond your limits. The better you take care of yourself, the faster you'll get better and back to your regular routine.

Dealing with Illness

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: VIRUS OR BACTERIA

TIME

5-10 minutes

MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster pad
Markers**

Activity Description

- Ask participants to list as many diseases or infections as they can. Put into two columns, one for sicknesses caused by viruses and another column for those caused by bacteria. Do not label the columns.
- Ask them if they know why you made two columns. Discuss that illnesses are caused by the body being infected with microorganisms.
- Discuss the difference between a virus and bacteria. An illness caused by a bacteria (strep throat) can many times be treated with an antibiotic. A virus (cold or flu) usually has to run its course, as there is no medicine to treat viral infections.
- Discuss vaccines. A vaccine is a shot of antibodies to help prevent various viruses from attacking the body. One example is the flu shot.
- Ask participants: What are the most common vaccines that are given? Examples of answers: *Chicken pox, tetanus, meningitis, HPV, flu shot, etc.*

Coach's Notes

This activity can be turned into a game with small groups to see how many infections or diseases they can list. Then have the groups try to identify whether the infection or disease is caused by a bacteria or virus. You'll find a variety of premade bacteria or virus Jeopardy games online if you have access to the internet.

SOCIAL WELLNESS

Being social means spending time in large or small groups and often means forming relationships with people in the groups. These relationships can take many forms, all of which have different meanings to us.

Relationships are an important part of a person's life. We have many different relationships in our lives, and we use different types of touch with all of those people. Some of those relationships are healthy and others are unhealthy. In the **Social Wellness** pillar, we will learn how to recognize healthy and unhealthy relationships as well as what to do if we are in an unhealthy relationship. We will explore safe and appropriate boundaries, different personality types in our relationships, and social skills to use in our relationships.

Who we spend time with can influence our choices, behavior and opportunities every day. All parts of wellness work together, especially when it comes to relationships. Having healthy relationships is important, not only for support and guidance, but also for fun and safety. Healthy relationships are fun, reduce stress, increase healthy hormones, and regulate good processes in the body. We can have many healthy relationships in our lives.

LESSONS IN SOCIAL WELLNESS

Relationships in My Life

Healthy Relationships

Social Skills in My Relationships

Safe and Appropriate Boundaries

Different People, Different Personalities

Bullying, Cyberbullying and Peer Pressure

Internet and Social Media: Safety and Perception

Relationships in Our Lives

A relationship is a connection between two or more people. We have different relationships in our lives. Who are the people in our life?

On poster paper or a white board, list the different people in our lives. Possible answers: family (parents, siblings, etc.), friends, romantic partners, classmates, coworkers, PCAs, coaches, teachers, police officers, librarians, bus drivers, etc.

Look at the long list we created of all of the people in our lives. Now think of the relationships in YOUR life. Write down the names of the people in your life in the following categories. See if you can write down at least five names in each category, except for “romantic partner.” This category would only have one name in it and for some people nothing in this category. A romantic partner is a boyfriend or a girlfriend. Not everyone has a boyfriend or girlfriend in their life right now. A crush is someone you are attracted to or someone you really like. Crushes are normal but it does not mean that the person is your boyfriend or girlfriend.

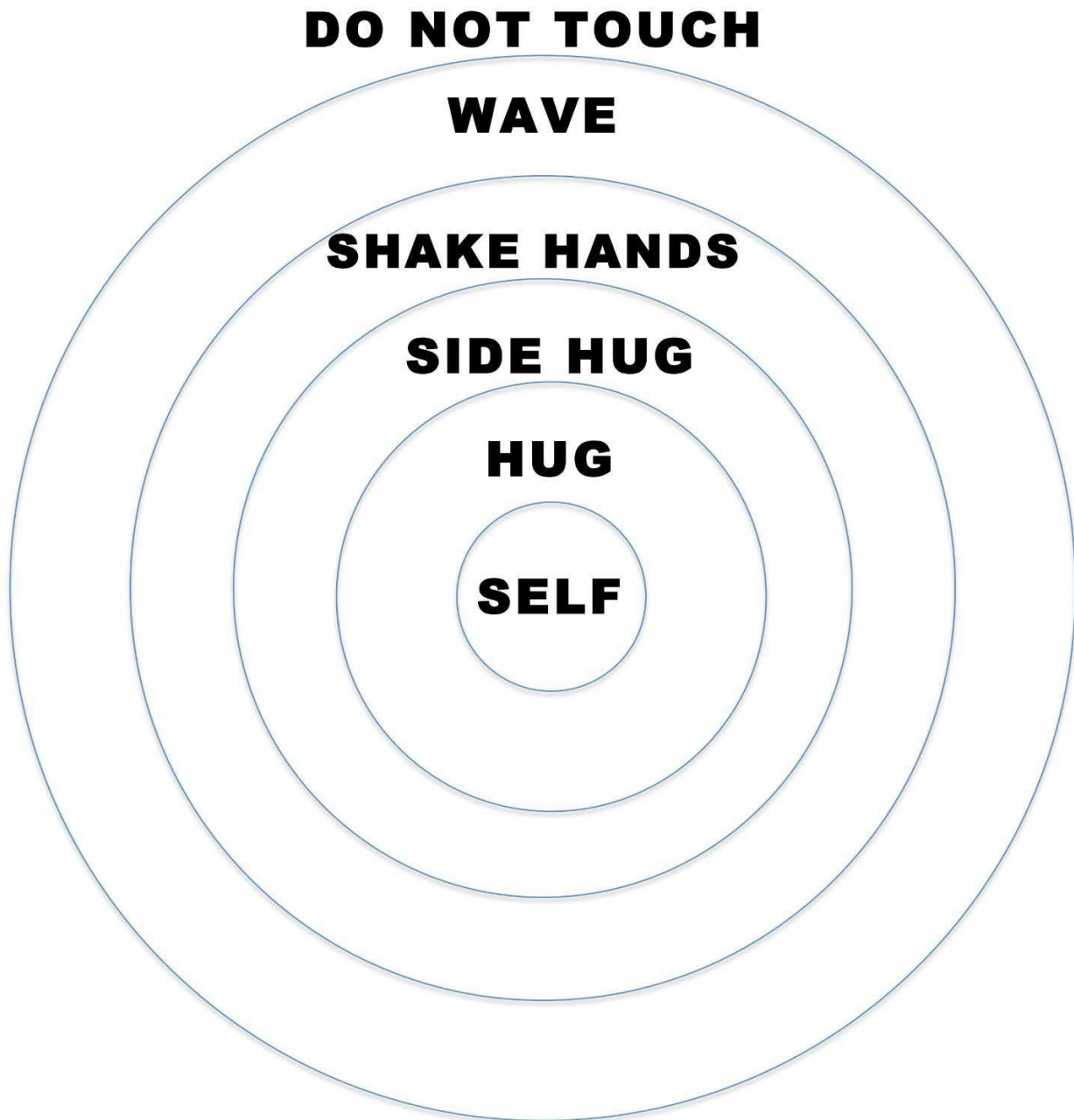
- Family:
- Friends:
- Romantic partner:
- Care givers:
- Community members:

Now looking at that list, let’s think about the types of touch we use with those people. We use different types of touch for all of the different relationships in our lives. Look at the relationship circle on the back side of this page and let’s think about where each of the relationships in our lives would fit in the circle. Write down the names of the people in your life on the relationship circle.

Contributed by Katie Thune, MA Ed., RYT



Relationship Circle



Mindfulness – Being Present

Mindfulness is being able to be aware of your thoughts, feelings and surrounding environment at the present moment. Mindfulness is paying attention to your own thoughts and feelings and not judging them without socially constructed ideal of “right” or “wrong.” Mindfulness also helps in times when it is difficult to concentrate because of all the thoughts that are running through your mind. Being mindful of your thoughts can have many benefits and help release stress or pressure.

How Mindfulness Helps Your Health and Social Life:

- Practicing being mindful through meditation has shown to work in aiding your immune system to fight illness.
- Being mindful helps you to focus better in situations and tune out distractions that may be environmental or psychological factors.
- Mindfulness helps in enhancing healthy relationships. By practicing being present, individuals are more optimistic and relaxed and can make you more accepting of others.
- An individual who is mindful has also been shown to be more compassionate toward others as well as themselves and help people who are in need of help.
- Meditation is a great way to relax and control your breathing. From meditation, you are able to take a new, clear approach to your thoughts and feelings and tackle them in a controlled manner.



Guide to Attaining Mindfulness:

- Begin to pay attention to your breathing (this can be key when you are experiencing intense emotions such as stress).
- Pay attention to senses (sights, sounds, smells) and physical sensations you are experiencing.
- Recognize that your thoughts don't control you. You control them.

After becoming mindful of your thoughts, senses and physical sensations around you, you are able to channel your emotions in a positive way and begin to become more present in the moment.

Other Ways to Becoming Mindful in the Moment:

- Make a list of all your thoughts and categorize them into a “To Do” list or “Maybe Later” list. Things that are on the “Maybe Later” list you can worry about in the future, once you have completed your “To Do” list. The things that make these two lists are not just tasks you need to accomplish, it includes *everything* from vacations that you want to take to worries about your family or global issues.
- In situations where you are waiting (in line, in traffic, for a movie to start, etc.), instead of becoming impatient or agitated, focus on your breathing and become mindful of your thoughts and take a positive spin on the situation. For example, think about how much you will enjoy the movie you're waiting to see.



Activity Options:

- **Practice breathing meditation:**
 - Find a comfortable, quiet place where you can fully relax your body.
 - Relax your shoulders and begin to breathe deeply; let your stomach expand as you inhale.
 - Focus on your breathing, let go of all physical sensations and thoughts.
 - Continue for about 10 minutes or until fully relaxed.
- **End the session by having team members make lists of “To Do,” “Maybe Later,” and/or “In Life/ Throughout Life”**
 - Include working on breathing exercises and mindfulness techniques every day until the next meeting.
 - During the next session, have the team reflect on what techniques worked best/what they learned from practicing mindfulness in their own life!

Appropriate Internet/Social Media Perception

As technology is becoming more and more advanced in the 21st century, many people turn to the Internet for information about possible new friends, people associated with a certain business, and/or potential employees. Not many people think that the company they are interviewing at for a job is going to hit the Internet and learn about all aspects of their social life. Additionally, people do not think their association with an organization or other individual will be of interest and a spotlight on the Internet. Especially with social media sites such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook where pictures are posted about the social event you went to or statuses that advertise your daily activities, it's very easy to learn information about others. This is why it's important, not only for your own media perception, but for the perception of other individuals or organizations you're associated with to keep a professional online image.

What to do:

Google yourself! Search all Internet web browsers such as Google or Yahoo with your name, your name in quotes, your name in conjunction with risk words such as "criminal" and e-mail address. What shows up?

Privacy settings are just settings. Don't rely on privacy settings to keep everything secure and out of the reach. Make sure to monitor what you are posting and keep it appropriate.

Watch your language/grammar! Using inappropriate language or posts can create a negative appearance. Try to post statuses that involve critical thinking.

Things to Avoid:

- If you don't want professional organizations or other individuals to be able to find you online, try altering your name or temporarily deactivating your social media accounts.
- When posting a profile picture, avoid unprofessional pictures.
- Posting statuses or tweets that exhibit poor work behavior, criticize your current employer, or indicate unflattering personality characteristics can put you in a negative light.

Social Media Mistakes when Representing Special Olympics:

- Reference illegal drugs, guns or alcohol; making sexual or discriminatory posts
- Posts with poor spelling and grammar
- Indicating your political affiliation
- Having an unprofessional username
- Posts indicating poor communication skills or lying about qualifications



This isn't saying that the use of social media should be prohibited. It's still okay and fun to use social media! However, make sure you are keeping in mind professionals, friends, and organizations have access to your Internet identity and make assumptions about your personality and characteristics based on the image you put forth. Along with the pictures of you and your friends attending a local concert, highlight all the volunteer activities that you do and the donations that you make to charity. Social media is a great way to keep connected with friends and can also be a location where you can highlight all the wonderful characteristics you have.



Internet Safety

Surfing the Internet can be very informative as you are able to find information on any topic you wish. However, what many people don't think about when perusing their favorite websites is other people online trying to access your personal information. Now with ever increasing advancements in technology, "cyber-crime" has increased so much that billions of dollars annually are being lost to online hackers!

Computer hackers can find every nook and alley that you don't even know about to get into your computer. The main focus of computer protection is to make sure you have the security measures such as anti-virus, anti-spyware and anti-spam. Once you have security, make sure to keep it up-to-date. Annual check-ups and updates on your security software is a necessity to keep thieves out of your computer and away from your personal information. When it comes to online purchases, make sure to always check credit card statements and receipts so that you catch any purchases you did not make. Something to consider is creating an alternate web-based email address to use for receiving discounts or e-mail updates from websites. When shopping online, pay attention to signs the website is secure such as "https" or a lock icon in the browser status bar. Also, avoid any pop-ups or free giveaways; these are the hotspots for hackers to get into your computer.



Tips for Internet and Computer Safety: Contributed by Katie Thune

- In any situation, DON'T give out any information that could indicate your identity. This includes your full name, address, birth date, telephone number, and the school you attend or your workplace.
 - In situations that require this information, such as online shopping or registration, take great caution in providing private information and make sure your security software is up-to-date.
- Don't share your passwords or usernames for any site with other people - even friends. Only share your password with your parent or another trusted adult.
- Use caution when talking with someone you don't know online:
 - Never chat, e-mail, or text with someone who is a stranger or makes you feel uncomfortable or scared.
 - Don't agree to meet a person you met on the Internet
 - Don't send a picture of yourself to a stranger.
 - *No matter how many times you "chat" with someone online, a person you meet online is a stranger. People on the Internet may not be who they say they are.*



- Ask someone to help you block texts, e-mails, or posts from people who you do not want to communicate with.
- Be aware of the mood you are in and make sure even if you are stressed or frustrated you are cautious of what you put on the Internet.
- Tell a trusted adult if a stranger contacts you. Also, tell an adult if you read or see something on the Internet that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Don't post pictures or videos of yourself online that could give strangers personal information (what your house or bedroom look like, where you work or go to school). Know that some games or applications with location services (like GPS) could tell strangers where you are or where you are going. Ask someone to help you check your privacy settings to be sure your location is only shared with people you know and trust.

Computers and the Internet can be a scary place where criminals can get your personal information. However, if you follow safe tips and have appropriate security on your computer, technology can be a wonderful tool. Just as you have the freedom to surf the web; other individuals have the freedom of putting information on the Internet. Everyone knows the main guidelines to have in mind when researching information for a school project or research assignment, but how can you determine if a site is credible for non-research information?

Tips on Credible Sources:

- Is the site for an established institution? Look for websites associated with already trusted institutions. For example, if you are looking for a site to learn about nutritional risks of an illness or disease, you will want to gravitate toward medical websites associated with the local hospital. Also, is the website associated with established institutions? This can be determined by entering the website in the search field and taking into account other links that are found in association with the one you are accessing.
- Stay away from commercial websites. Besides the obvious online store websites, most often websites associated with companies or businesses are trying to sell you products. The websites normally end with “.com.” Be careful when accessing these websites and the information you receive because the company may be giving you false information to get you to buy products.
- Watch out for political websites that put bias on their information. Political websites and reporters put a lot of articles and information on the Internet that are full of bias. Steer clear of these websites and search for ones that present both sides of the issue equally.
- Dates. When was the last time the website was updated? The most up-to-date information is commonly more credible than not.

Examples of Credible Websites on Health Information:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov>
- Mayo Clinic: <http://www.mayoclinic.com>
- NetWellness: <http://www.netwellness.org>



Healthy Active Lifestyle

Want to have a healthy lifestyle and stay active, but tired of your daily exercise routine? Try bringing together your friends and exercise together! Exercising with your friends makes you more accountable and less likely to skip a workout all while being enjoyable in the process.

Here are some fun, healthy options to do with your friends and stay active:

- Instead of getting the group together for your weekly Zumba or Pilates class, plan a weekend where you all go hiking before grabbing lunch at your favorite healthy restaurant.
- Attend different group fitness classes at the local gym or even in your community to meet new friends and people in your local community!
- Plan a weekend get-away where you and your friends go camping in the wilderness during the summer months, or learn to ski/snowboard in the winter months.
- Busy schedule and can't find time to take a weekend off? Instead of going to your favorite coffee shop with your friends for lunch, plan to go on a walk or jog and catch up on your friend's lives in a healthy active way!
- Love playing sports? Join a local adult league and play your favorite sport with friends and make new friends!
- Gather all of your friends on a sunny, summer afternoon for a cookout or BBQ and have fun activities planned such as beach volleyball or pick-up basketball.



There are so many options for you to be active in your daily routine and still have time for your friends! These options are only a few ways that you can spice up your workout regime, stay in touch with friends, and live a healthy, active lifestyle.

Volunteering

Being active and giving back to your community is a great way to stay involved in current events and help others in your community! Get your friends involved and even make new friends all while helping others.

1: Volunteer!

- How to find local opportunities? Join volunteer walks for a great cause such as Relay for Life.
- Reach out to local hospitals, religious centers, local newspapers and schools – there are always areas where volunteer help is needed and you can be that person!

2: Join community groups or make your own.

- Find a community group that fits your interests – you can help organize events such as fundraisers, clean-up crews, pot luck meals, festivals and much more.
- Can't find a group or association that you think you would enjoy? Create your own!
 - Gather friends and family and start a community group that can help raise money for local churches or schools.

3: Host a food drive or donate your unused items.

- Get your friends together and participate in food drives at your school or work to help support your local food shelf.
- Going through your closet? Donate the clothes you don't wear anymore to the Salvation Army or Goodwill!



4: Volunteer with Special Olympics!

- You're already an athlete for Special Olympics, now help Special Olympics just as they've helped you!
- Make sure you've completed Athletes as Volunteers and you're set to go!
- Contact your local Special Olympics office for more information about Athletes as Volunteers.

Volunteering doesn't have to be a chore that you should do. Bring your friends and family together and help give back to your community in a fun way! Volunteering and supporting your community can help build friendships and relationships as well as create new ones.

Active Listening

Listening is receiving information from another source and interpreting the information. So what is active listening then? This is where interpreting the information becomes important. Active listening is when you are consciously trying to comprehend the message that another individual is talking about. When you are not actively listening, messages can be misconstrued and consequently, conflict may arise. Well isn't listening and active listening the same thing? Not necessarily. It is shown that an individual only comprehends 25-50% of what they "listen" to. When you are making a conscious effort to understand the message of a conversation you comprehend almost all of the conversation! More specifically, active listening is essential in the work place because it leads to improved customer relations and productivity with few mistakes.

Majority of us have difficulty with active listening because, let's face it, it takes a lot of effort! How do you become a better active listener? Here are some guidelines to follow to become a more efficient active listener. By following this outline, you will become a proactive listener in no time!

- *Pay attention* – put all distracting mental and environmental factors aside and listen to the individual you are conversing with. This includes not talking! Listen! Try to understand the message that the other person is trying to convey. Everyone can spit out the definition of a word, but what's the big picture?
- *Show that you are paying attention* – use body language to convey to your speaker that you are paying attention. This may include facing the speaker and giving them eye contact, facial expressions such as a smile, and nodding occasionally. Not only does this show your speaker that you are listening to what they have to say, but now the speaker can focus on the message they want to convey instead of worrying if you are paying attention.
- *When the speaker is done talking, provide feedback without judgement* – avoid having bias opinions toward the message that the speaker is discussing. If you do not understand clearly what another individual is trying to say, ask for clarification! For example, inform the speaker about what you understand the message to be and ask them to verify if that is correct or not. If not, ask the speaker to elaborate.
- *Wait your turn* – do not interrupt the speaker when they are talking. Be an active listener and work to comprehend the message they are trying to present.

Having difficulty? Try to mentally repeat what the speaker is saying and interpret the main message of the conversation. Repetition will make you more in tuned to what the speaker is saying and the message of the conversation is more likely to stick in your mind.



Hygiene

Hygiene is an important part of your overall health, because it's all about trying to keep you clean and healthy. Let's look at the different ways that we can improve and maintain our hygiene:

Washing your hands

Washing your hands is the easiest way to keep clean throughout the day! By washing your hands, you can get dirty germs off you to prevent getting sick or getting others sick.

The best way to wash your hands is by following these steps:

1. Wet your hands with running water
2. Rub soap into your hands for about 20 seconds (about the same time as singing "Happy Birthday" to yourself!)
3. Rinse your hands with water and dry them using a towel or air dryer.

It's best to wash your hands before and after you eat, after you go to the bathroom, after you play with animals, after blowing your nose/coughing/sneezing, or whenever you think your hands may have gotten some germs after touching something dirty!

If you don't have soap and water, try using hand sanitizer! Just make sure to rub it all into your hands until it is completely dry.

Taking a Shower or Bath

Showering or taking a bath is a great way to get your whole body clean! How often you shower is a little tricky though. Some people like to shower every day as part of their morning/evening routine, and others like to shower less often. A good suggestion is trying to take a shower or a bath every other day. That way you can stay clean and looking fresh!

Make sure you're using shampoo when you wash your hair, about a quarter size on your palm would be perfect to use. Body soap is important too and making sure you clean your whole body.

Brushing your teeth

You should aim to brush your teeth at least twice a day; once when you wake up in the morning and once before you go to bed at night. If you have a sticky snack or something gets stuck in your teeth after dinner, it's okay to brush them one extra time! Make sure that you brush your teeth for 2 whole minutes, and it might be a good idea to have a timer by the sink when you're brushing them. Make sure to get all parts of your mouth; your front teeth, your back teeth, and even your tongue! That way your whole mouth can be clean.



Once a day, try to floss your teeth after brushing them as well. That helps get anything stuck out from in between your teeth and to keep your gums healthy too.

It's important to keep our mouth clean so that we can have fresh breath, a nice smile and avoid getting cavities!

Having clean teeth along with washing our hands and taking showers/baths can help us be the cleanest we can be! The cleaner we are, the better we can look and feel. Hygiene is an important part of being healthy so it's important to take it seriously and try our best!



Personality Types

There are many different personality types in addition to many different ways to classify types. You can either look at personality types extensively through Myers-Briggs classification, which has sixteen, various personality types. However, for our purposes, we will broadly generalize personality types into four categories – assertive, amiable, expressive, and analytical.

Assertive

Assertive personalities can also be looked at as competitive. Competitive individuals can also be known as “Type A” personalities, which you’ve probably learned in psychology classes. These individuals want to do the best that they can do at any task that is thrown their way. They’re the “go-getters.” It would be expected that assertive personality types are strong-willed and decisive. Now how do I appropriately interact with assertive personalities? These individuals like to me in leadership positions, so let them take charge. Also, maybe challenge them in a friendly competition.

Amiable

Amiable personalities can also be looked at as spontaneous. Spontaneous individuals thrive off life and adventure. These are the people that are the life of the party! Outgoing personality types are commonly in career paths including politics, the entertainment business, or party planners. When interacting with these types of individuals, you will need to bring some excitement, maybe not to their level, but try! Amiable personalities grasp the big-picture and live off anticipation of what will happen next.

Expressive

Expressive personalities can also be looked at as humanistic. These individuals work to please others and live off three concepts – happiness, friendship, and respect. You will see people with humanistic personality types working as teachers, caregivers, or counselors, where they try to help people in their careers. How do you interact with these types of individuals? Easy. Try not to create confrontation or argument. The key to cooperating with expressive individuals is to socialize and empathize. Everyone needs a little love here and there!

Analytical

Analytical personalities can also be looked at as methodical. These individuals are the ones who are always on time, appropriately dressed and matching, and know exactly where to go. Without methodical people, the world would be a disaster! Analytical individuals thrive off organization and deadlines; without fail, there are persistent, serious, and orderly. What careers do we normally see methodical personalities? Most



go on to become doctors, professors, or engineers. Intimidated by these people's promptness and order? Don't worry, now you know how they work! Come prepared when starting a conversation with analyticals. Bring data, facts, numbers, spreadsheets, anything!

When you work in an office environment, it is not surprising that you will encounter every personality type, maybe even multiple times. It is good to evaluate on yourself and determine what personality type you are. Once knowing your own personality type, you can consciously make an effort to not offend other personality types.

Here are some general rules of thumb to follow when interacting with co-workers or customers in the work setting. Some of these may also be applied when out of the office!

- Learn about you co-workers and learn how they like to work/what environment they like to work in. Adapt accordingly! For example, you need music in order to be productive; however, your co-worker in the cubicle next to you needs absolute silence. How do you adapt? Try using headphones so you can still listen to your music and your co-worker can have silence!
- Pick and choose your battles. Maybe there's a little quarrel in the office between some people, do you get involved? If you're not directly responsible or it doesn't affect your work, try and stay out of the conflict. Set your priorities straight. This sometimes means letting things go when they aren't so important.
- Everyone is in this together and everyone wants to work cooperatively, no matter how many different personality types there are interacting! Everyone is working toward the same goal – company success.
- Above all, make sure you're respecting your co-workers and customers. Everyone has a different way of looking at a situation or a different experience, respect their values and ideas and work cooperatively!



Healthy Social Skills

A healthy lifestyle isn't simply eating healthy and exercising. It also includes healthy interactions among your friends, family, co-workers and other people you encounter during your daily routine. Ways to work on having healthy social skills can be broken into four categories:

Cooperation:

- Includes playing your part in a positive way when interacting with others.
 - Example: taking turns, contributing in group tasks or projects at school or in the work force and sharing or being patient when working with others.
- Helps create a healthy work environment and is a way everyone can be included and work together!



Communication Skills:

- Communication skills are essential in healthy relationships.
- Involves utilizing active listening with understanding and empathy toward the other person and thinking before you speak.
- Being engaged when communicating with other individuals helps build healthy and strong relationships.

Respect Yourself and Others:

- It is important to have respect for yourself and show others the respect you would want to be treated with.
- Ways to show respect for others:
 - Being patient and following directions
 - Avoiding bullying others or putting them down
 - Cooperating and taking turns and respecting other people's property
- Respect yourself by having confidence and stand up for yourself if you're being bullied, teased or don't feel comfortable in a situation.

Resolve Conflict in a Positive Way:

- It is not healthy to get angry and negative when a conflict arises.
- Instead, work on active listening!
 - Try and realize why you're angry, control your anger and listen to what the other person has to say to understand their point of view on the situation.
 - Then, work out a compromise that benefits both individuals.
- It is important to remember to have respect for yourself when conflict arises and to stand up for yourself, but not bully or tease others.
- By resolving conflict in a positive way, you learn to forgive yourself and others and move on in a healthy way.





Social Wellness Activities

Relationships in My Life

Key Messages

A relationship is a connection between two or more people.

We have many different relationships in our lives, and we use different types of touch or affection within all of those relationships.

Background

Relationships are connections between two or more people. They are a natural and necessary part of life. Within the many different types of relationships, people use different types of touch or affection. Each person is unique. Some people like to have a wide-ranging network of people, while others are more comfortable with a smaller network. Let's look at some different types of relationships.

Types of Relationships

Family: A family may include parents, siblings, aunts and uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews, and more. These are usually people related by birth, adoption, or marriage. Family will look and feel different for everyone. Family may include grandparents, step-family, foster-family, and other extended family members.

Friends: Friendships are a chosen relationship. Both people want to be in that relationship. Often they have something in common, such as a hobby or other interest, or school or work. Friends are bonded by these commonalities. Friendship is usually an informal relationship, but some friendships may be deeper than others. Some people have many friends, and others prefer to have only a few friends.

Romantic Partner/Significant Other: A romantic partnership is also a chosen relationship between two people. It's a different relationship from a friendship in that both people have romantic feelings for one another. They can be a boyfriend or a girlfriend, a partner, a husband or wife, or a significant other. Not everyone has a romantic partner. In a romantic relationship it is important that both people want to be romantic. If one person has a "crush" on the other, this means that they have sexual, happy feelings for that person. A one-way crush is when only one person is attracted to the other. A two-way crush is when both people are attracted to each other. In order for a romantic relationship to develop, both people need to be attracted to each other.

Professional Relationships: These are relationships we have through work or school. Sometimes these relationships turn into friendships. These people can also be called colleagues, peers, or classmates. People in relationships like these may or may not like each other, but they are connected through work or school. Some examples of professional relationships include classmates, co-workers, teammates and teachers. Caregivers and paid helpers also fit into the category of professional relationships. This may include personal care assistants, therapists, teachers, coaches, and more.

Community Members: Everyone is a member of a broader community. You may know these people well, a little bit, or not at all. All of the people in the above relationships are included in the broader community as well, but know each other much better than community members would know each other. Some examples of people in the community are: police officers, a member of a class or club, bus drivers, librarians, store clerks, neighbors, doctors, and many other people.

Relationships in My Life

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: PEOPLE IN MY LIFE

TIME

10-15 minutes

MATERIALS

Pen/pencil

Copies of “People in My Life” worksheet for all participants

Activity Description

Write the names of all the people in your life, in each of the categories in the worksheet.

Try to think of as many names or roles as you can.

Coach’s Notes

Remind participants that we usually only have one or zero names at a time in the Romantic Partner category. It’s possible for people to have more than one romantic partner at a time, but it’s important that we learn how to have a healthy relationship with one romantic partner before we can have a healthy relationship with more than one partner.

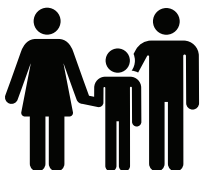
Insert People in My Life worksheet

* Activity adapted from Sexuality for All Abilities, Mad Hatter Wellness, www.sexualityforallabilities.com and used with permission.

PEOPLE IN MY LIFE

INSTRUCTIONS: Write down the names of the people in your life for these categories.

My Family



My Friends



Romantic Partner



Professional Relationships



Community Members



Relationships in My Life

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: RELATIONSHIP CIRCLE*

TIME

10-15 minutes

MATERIALS

- Pen/pencil
- Completed “People in My Life” activity
- Copies of “Relationship Circle” worksheet
- Pen/pencil

Activity Description

Start by writing your own name in the middle circle.

In the “Hug” circle, write the names of people with whom you have the closest relationships. Many people put only a few people in this circle. It might include your immediate family and a few friends. In the “Side Hug” circle, write the names of people who are also very close to you, but not as close as those in the “hug” circle. This may include more friends and other family members. You might even include a caregiver or support person with whom you are very close.

In the “Shake Hands” circle, write the names of people you know well, but who are not your closest friends or family. You’ll have more people in this circle, and you might include classmates, colleagues/co-workers, teammates, teachers and more. This circle may include types of touch that are hand to hand such as high fives, fist bumps, etc.

In the “Wave” circle, write the names of people you’re acquainted with but don’t know very well. This circle will have even more people and may include some community members you see often and know their names. This circle also includes types of affection that are not touch (peace fingers, head nod, salute, etc.).

The circle titled “Do Not Touch” includes the rest of the world (strangers, etc.). We do not need to talk to everyone we see on the street.

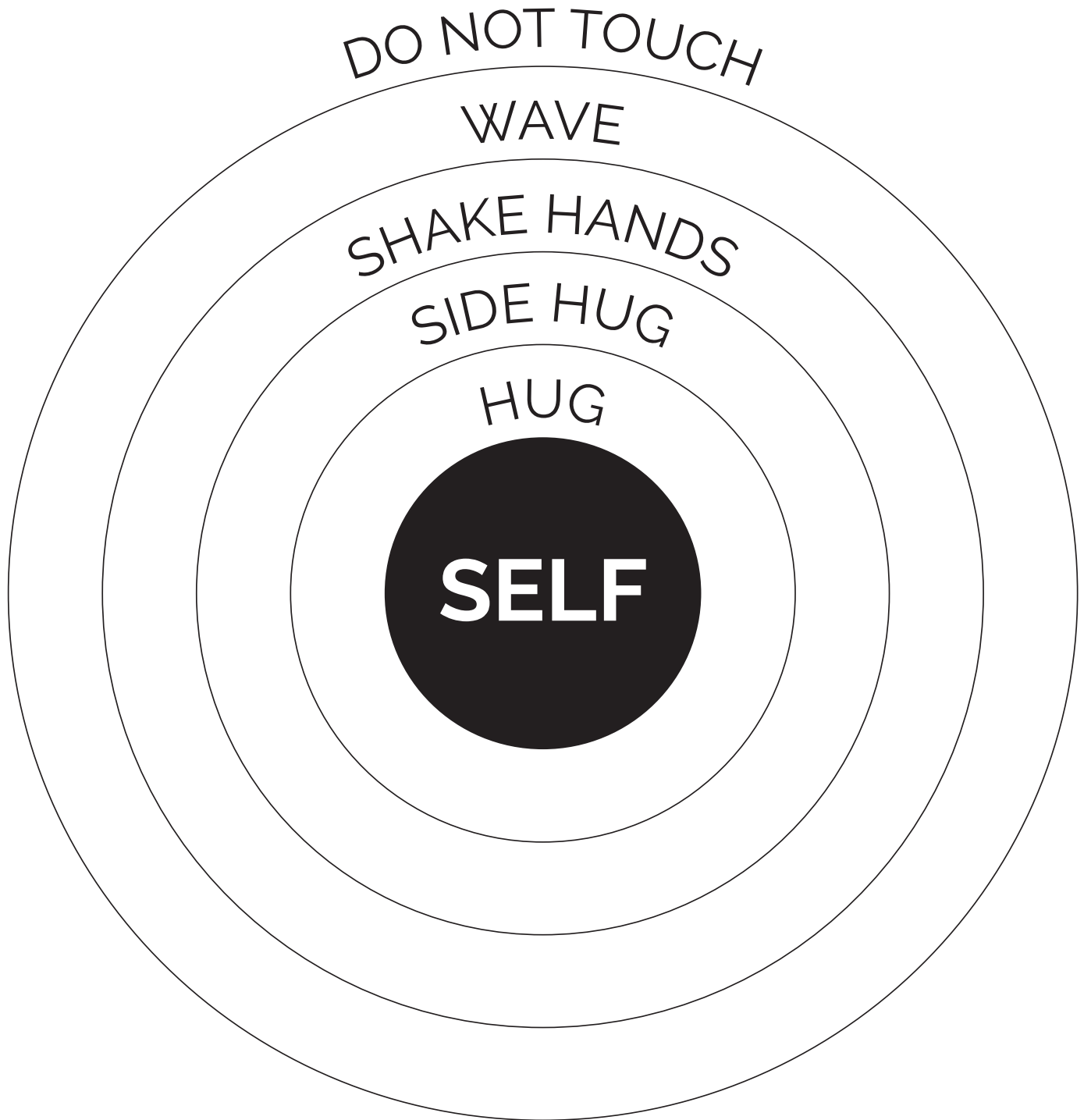
Coach’s Notes

Remember that all people have different and unique relationships with others. Although it seems natural to include immediate family members like siblings and parents in the “Hug” circle, not all people are comfortable with this, and that’s okay. Encourage people to write the names they feel are appropriate for each type of relationship.

Insert Relationship Circle worksheet

* Activity adapted from Sexuality for All Abilities, Mad Hatter Wellness, www.sexualityforallabilities.com and used with permission.

RELATIONSHIP CIRCLE



* Activity adapted from Sexuality for All Abilities, Mad Hatter Wellness, www.sexualityforallabilities.com and used with permission.

Healthy Relationships

Key Messages

Healthy relationships have a positive impact in our lives.
Unhealthy relationships may have a negative impact.

Background

We have many different types of relationships in our lives, and it's important to understand what makes a healthy relationship, as well as what makes an unhealthy relationship. Both healthy and unhealthy relationships can be with anyone in your life - family members, friends and romantic partners. Healthy relationships make you feel happy, fulfilled, good about yourself, and loved. Unhealthy relationships might make you feel sad, lonely, or bad about yourself. Many different behaviors contribute to both healthy and unhealthy relationships.

In a healthy relationship:

- You take turns making decisions.
- You respect each other through words and actions.
- You use kind and caring words.
- You both share thoughts and feelings even if you disagree.
- You both support and encourage each other.
- You communicate well.
- You can say no.

These are just some examples of behaviors that make healthy relationships. When you're in a healthy relationship, you're more likely to take care of yourself, have other healthy relationships, feel good about yourself, be confident making your own decisions, and have fun.

In an unhealthy relationship:

- You don't respect each other with words or actions.
- Decisions are unfairly made or one-sided.
- One person tries to control the other's actions.
- One or both of you criticize the other's thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- You might feel worried when you disagree.
- You might feel pressured to do things you don't want to do.
- You don't communicate well.
- You may experience yelling or physical aggression during an argument.
- One person wants the other to keep secrets.

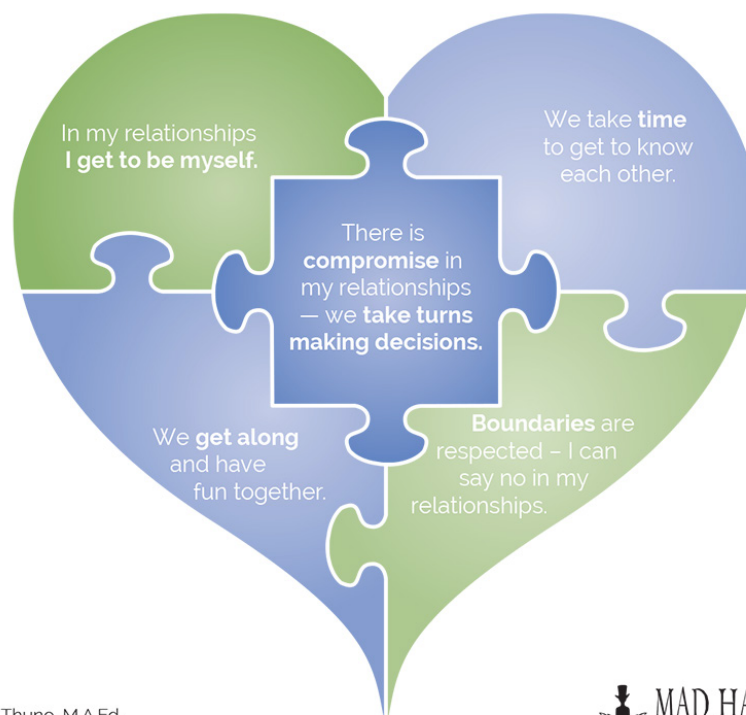
These are only a few examples of unhealthy behaviors in relationships. When you're in an unhealthy relationship with someone, you might feel sad frequently, have lower self-esteem, experience self-doubt, stop caring for yourself, and allow other relationships to suffer. If you're in an unhealthy relationship with a friend, family member or romantic partner, it's important to tell someone about it. Also consider asking how to create some boundaries for yourself.

Healthy Relationships

When we're forming or participating in all the different relationships we have in our lives, it's important that we feel good about ourselves. Look for ways to have fun, learn about each other, and continue developing the relationship over time. One way to nourish relationships is to do activities that you enjoy together. You can try new activities together as well. It's important to stay positive and encourage each other throughout your time together.

Relationships are somewhat like puzzles. If one piece is missing, the puzzle isn't complete. Here are five pieces of a healthy relationship. If one piece is missing, the relationship may need some work to become a healthy relationship.

THE HEART OF RELATIONSHIPS



Katie Thune, M.A.Ed.
www.sexualityforallabilities.com



In my relationships I get to be myself. I don't have to pretend to be someone else. The relationship is truthful and real.

We take time to get to know each other. The amount of time to get to know someone is different for all relationships.

There is compromise in my relationships - we take turns making decisions. There is a shared power in the relationship.

We get along and have fun together. We have things in common. Arguments are brief and end respectfully.

Boundaries are respected - I can say no in my relationships. If I say no, the other person doesn't get upset with me.

Healthy Relationships

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: LOVE IS...

TIME

30-40 minutes

MATERIALS

Large paper
Markers or colored pencils
Pen/pencils
Scissors

Activity Description

Draw a big heart in the middle of the large paper.

On the inside of the heart, write feelings you have when you're with someone with whom you enjoy a healthy relationship. Be creative. Think of as many good feelings you have when you are around them as you can.

On the outside of the heart, write down the feelings you may have if you're in an unhealthy relationship. Discuss the differences between how you feel when you're in an unhealthy relationship and in a healthy relationship.

(Optional) Cut out the heart with the positive feelings on it as a reminder of what healthy relationships look like.

Coach's Notes

A fun variation on this activity is to use old magazines to make a collage of the feelings instead of writing the words. Another variation is to enlarge the "Heart of Relationships" and use that as the background for the collage. Glue the cut-out words and pictures on top of each category/puzzle piece.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: THINGS IN COMMON

TIME

30 minutes

MATERIALS

Paper
Pen/pencil

Activity Description

This activity can be done with partners.

Each partner, on their own paper, should draw a line down the center of the page, making two columns.

On the left side of the paper, write down hobbies or activities that you love to do.

When both partners are finished, compare your lists.

On the right side of the paper, make a list of things you have in common.

Brainstorm new ways you can do these activities together. Examples:

- If you both like baseball, schedule a time to play catch.
- Do you like to walk or run? Find new places or routes to go together.
- Do you both like reading? Find new libraries and bookshops where you can browse through your favorites and discuss them.

Finally, go out and do an activity together.

Coach's Notes

This activity can combine with the physical activity part of the SOfit session. Have participants choose physical activities that they enjoy doing and choose one of those to do during your physical activity session.

Social Skills in My Relationships

Key Messages

I can have healthy relationships when I have healthy social skills.
Healthy social skills include positive communication with others.
Respect for yourself and others is important in having healthy social skills

Background

Having a healthy lifestyle is much more than eating well and exercising often; it's also about the relationships you have with others. Healthy interactions with the people in your life - parents, siblings, colleagues, and community members around you - are an important part of your daily health. There are many ways to make sure you have healthy relationships with those around you. These include respect for yourself and others.

Respect Yourself

It's important to show respect for yourself, in order to show respect for others. Some ways you show respect to yourself are:

- Have confidence and high self-esteem.
- Stand up for yourself. This means "telling your truth" when necessary in a kind way. If you are being bullied or are uncomfortable in a situation, it's important to say what you're feeling. It's most important to tell your truth when you're hurt, angry, or sad about something.
- Take care of your body and mind.
- Take care of your physical health through exercise and fitness. This shows your body and mind that you care about you.
- Take time for yourself. This might mean saying no sometimes. If you have many obligations or feel as though you need time to yourself, it's okay to say no to activities. It's very important to care for your emotional health and take time for yourself if you need it.
- Listen to yourself. When making decisions about activities or relationships, take time to inventory your feelings. Often, if you look inside, you will already have answers to questions you may have about relationships or situations.
- Respect your own space. Personal space is different for everyone. If you feel as though someone is invading your space, it's okay to step back or ask the other person to respect your space.

Respect Others

- Be patient. Not everyone thinks, acts, or does things the same way. There is usually a reason for this, and sometimes we have to be patient with others.
- Respect the things around you. One way we show respect is to respect the things and property around us. Respect all things and spaces as if they were your own to care for.
- Build strong relationships through communication.

Social Skills in My Relationships

Communication Is Key

Active listening:

- Use understanding and empathy when listening.
- Turn your body, head, and ears towards others when listening.
- Give nonverbal cues that you are listening, such as nodding your head, making eye contact, or using your body to indicate a response (shrugging your shoulders, etc.).

Engaging in communication with others:

- Approach others with positive communication. (“How are you?” “How was your day?” “I hope you’re doing well.”)
- Ask questions and actively listen to responses.
- When you ask a question, wait to speak until the other person has responded.
- Ask other relevant follow-up questions.

Resolving Conflict

- Use self-awareness to understand when you’re feeling angry, sad, frustrated, negative, or upset.
- Use active listening skills to show that you’re understanding the other person.
- Use deep-breathing and positive language when talking to others about your opinions.
- Try to understand the other point of view. There’s always more than one perspective on any situation.
- Apologizing for - and forgiving - negative language and actions is also important to move forward to more positive resolutions now and in the future.
- Cooperation is one form of conflict resolution. Sometimes this means both individuals or both groups in a conflict have to give up something they want. If you can find a way to agree on a positive outcome for both, this is a great way to positively resolve a conflict.

Social Skills in My Relationships

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: COMMUNICATION GAME *

TIME

30 minutes

MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper
Markers**

Activity Description

Draw the following chart on a whiteboard or poster paper. Write down the first situation and leave the dialogue boxes empty. Tell participants they are going to learn some skills that will help them communicate more clearly with friends, family, and people in their lives.

Ask individuals to imagine that a friend comes up and remarks, "Joe won't let me join the kickball game." Then go through the different ways to respond, starting with "Restate" and ending with "Encourage" or "Empathize," as in the example below. After showing the first two situations, ask the group to come up with responses for the last scenario.

Situation	Restate	Reflect Feelings	Ask Questions	Share Your Experience	Encourage or Empathize
Joe won't let me join the kickball game.	He said you can't play?	You look mad. You sound frustrated.	When did he say that? Who was there? Did anyone stick up for you?	Tony did that to me on Tuesday.	That is so annoying!
Mary told Frank that I like him!	She told Frank?	You sound upset.	How do you know she told him? What did you say to her?	I've had girls do that to me. I was really mad.	I'm sorry she did that. I know you didn't want anyone to tell.
My mom won't let me go to the party.					

After completing the third scenario, divide the participants into two groups. Ask two volunteers from Group 1 to come to the front of the room. Write a new situation in the next row of the chart and tell the participants they will have three minutes to keep a conversation going using the different communication skills. Each time they use one of the skills, put a check under that skill. Each check is worth a point. If the two people get stuck, they can ask for help from others on their team.

Then have two individuals from Group 2 do the same. The group with the most points at the end of the game wins.

It's best to go two or three rounds before declaring a winner, so everyone will have more time to practice.

After playing the game in groups, have participants divide into pairs and practice together for 2-3 minutes. It helps to give them a subject, such as "Tell about a time when you were really scared."

Coach's Notes

This game can also be done in one large group without making it a competition. It may be helpful to practice in pairs before playing as a game.

* Activity adapted from Yoga Calm for Children, www.yogacalm.org and used with permission.

Social Skills in My Relationships

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: CONVERSATION

TIME

10-15 minutes

MATERIALS

None

Activity Description

This activity offers practice in active listening and speaking in a conversation. Participants will try three different ways to have a conversation and show active speaking and listening.

Put individuals into pairs to practice. Go through the activity twice so both people can practice being the speaker and the listener.

Scenario 1: The speaker describes something that he or she likes to do during free time at home. The listener will only use “passive” listening, meaning the speaker cannot ask questions, talk in any way, or encourage the speaker (even through nonverbal signals, such as nodding).

Scenario 2: The speaker will describe one of the most exciting things he or she has ever done. The listener will give both verbal and nonverbal signals that he or she is listening. This can include making eye contact, nodding, using encouraging words, smiling and more.

Scenario 3: The speaker will make and finish the statement, “My favorite sport to play is _____.” The listener will ask questions that expand the conversation and invite the speaker to say more.

Coach's Notes

One possible variation is to use prewritten conversation starters or topics. Picture prompts can also be a fun variation and may assist with comprehension.

Safe and Appropriate Boundaries

Key Messages

- A boundary is a line that others cannot cross unless I say it's okay.
- My boundaries might be different from another person's boundaries.
- I need to respect my boundaries.
- I need to respect other people's boundaries and ask before touching another person.
- I can say no to touch or behavior that makes me feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Background

We have many different relationships in our lives. The type of relationship we have with a person helps us to know what kind of touch is okay and appropriate. We use different types of touch with the different people in our lives. Not all family members receive the same type of touch. Not all friends receive the same type of touch.

A boundary is a line that marks the limit of an area. Our boundary is defined as a line that others cannot cross unless we say it's okay. We're not allowed to cross into another person's boundary unless that person says it's okay. Boundaries will be different for different people, and it's important that we respect other people's boundaries and ask before touching them. We don't know what other people's boundaries are before asking.

We have warning signals in our body that let us know when something doesn't feel comfortable or something is wrong. Everyone has a different signal in his or her body. Examples of signals in our body include: feeling uncomfortable in the stomach, body is shaky, breathing is fast, heart or chest hurts, body is sweaty, and more. Sometimes these feelings can be confusing, because they might be similar to how we feel when we have a crush on someone. It is important to think about the feelings we have in our bodies so that we know when something is uncomfortable or wrong.

Safe and Appropriate Boundaries

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: PERSONAL SPACE *

TIME

10-15 minutes

MATERIALS

None

Activity Description

Ask two volunteers to come to the front of the room. Have them stand about 10-12 feet apart, facing each other.

Ask Partner 1 to begin walking toward Partner 2. As Partner 1 nears, Partner 2 raises a hand to show the boundary of his or her personal space.

Now ask Partner 2 to walk toward Partner 1 and see if that person's personal boundary is the same or different.

Try this with several other pairs, noticing the difference in individuals' needs for personal space. Discussion questions may include:

What are some things that can affect a person's need for personal space? Examples of answers: how well they know each other, personal hygiene, how a person feels that day, height, family and culture, profession or occupation.

What are nonverbal cues that you notice as people are approaching the boundary? Examples of answers: laughing, turning the face away, leaning way back, blushing, and so on.

Coach's Notes

Option can be to have group in two lines, facing each other. Have one line walk toward the other until each participant comes to the boundary of another's personal space. Notice the differences in people. Alter the lines and repeat.

* Activity adapted from Yoga Calm for Children, www.yogacalm.org and used with permission.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: UNWANTED TOUCH

TIME

10-15 minutes

MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper
Markers**

Activity Description

Ask participants: What can we say or do if we don't like the type of touch or affection from another person?

Write responses on the whiteboard or poster paper. Examples of responses may include: "I don't like that," "I'm not comfortable with that," walk or move away, turn away.

In partners, practice using words and the body to let someone know that you don't like the type of touch.

Coach's Notes

Sometimes it can be confusing if the role play includes inappropriate touch. Encourage participants to role play appropriate touch only.

Different People, Different Personalities

Key Messages

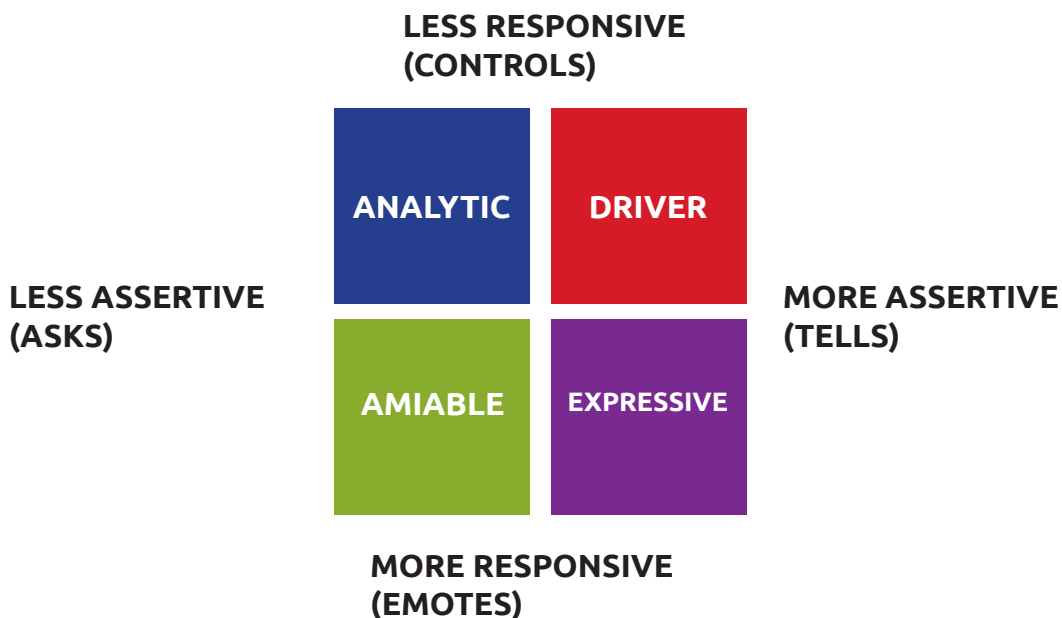
There are many different personality types.
People express themselves differently depending on their personality type.

Background

There are many different studies about personality types, and there are different factors that play a role in what someone's personality is like. One personality type indicator frequently used by employers is called the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator. It's named after two psychology researchers. The Myers-Briggs inventory includes sixteen different personality types and is an extensive and comprehensive test. Another pair of researchers, Merrill and Reid, simplified the Myers-Briggs list into four basic types: **Driver**, **Amiable**, **Expressive**, and **Analytical**.

The Merrill-Reid model uses two main measurements to determine the core personality type. **Assertiveness** is the degree of forcefulness or directiveness used when communicating with others and making requests. More assertive people often tell others what they want and make demands, rather than asking. Less assertive people often ask, rather than demand, or sometimes they say nothing at all. **Responsiveness** refers to the amount of emotion with which people respond to others. More responsive people often react with high levels of emotion. They can be seen as either empathetic or sometimes as out of control of their emotions. Less responsive people generally react with less emotion and are often more guarded or less empathetic.

Looking at Responsiveness and Assertiveness and the interaction of those two dimensions, we can create a grid with the four main personality types. Everyone is on a continuum, and no style is better than another. These descriptions are just another way to understand the way people interact with each other.



Different People, Different Personalities

Analytical personalities are both *less* responsive and *less* assertive. These people are often:

- Task-oriented instead of people-oriented.
- Prudent, structured, and organized.
- Objective, evaluative, and problem-solving.
- Organized and structured.
- Independent in that they prefer working alone rather than in groups.
- Cautious in making decisions.
- Critical or pessimistic in nature.
- Sometimes overly critical or unresponsive.
- Drawn to structure and routine, fearing change and uncertainty.

Amiable personalities are *less* assertive and *more* responsive. These people are often:

- People-oriented or sociable.
- Friendly and relatable.
- Good listeners and good at teamwork.
- In search of respect and approval.
- Slow decision-makers.
- Followers rather than leaders.
- Uncomfortable with conflict and risk-taking.
- Fearful of change and uncertainty.
- Steady, hard workers.
- Averse to conflict and sometimes “soft-spoken.”
- Able to blend into any situation.

Driver personalities are *more* assertive and *less* responsive. These people are often:

- Not so worried about other people’s reactions.
- Results-driven and pragmatic.
- Efficient and focused on tasks.
- Sometimes impatient and insensitive or inconsiderate.
- Take-charge leaders.
- Careful planners.
- Very decisive.
- Competitive.
- Independent.
- Direct, quick communicators (“get to the point”).

Different People, Different Personalities

Expressive personalities are both *more* assertive and *more* responsive. These people are often:

- Creative and intuitive.
- Outgoing and enthusiastic.
- Spontaneous and fun-loving.
- Great at teamwork.
- Persuasive and motivating.
- Seeking to be heard and acknowledged.
- Fearful of being ignored or rejected.
- Impatient with routine.
- Focused on the “big picture” rather than the details.
- Prone to overgeneralize or exaggerate.
- Articulate and quick.
- Sometimes poor listeners.
- Prone to distract or get distracted.
- Sometimes impractical and impatient.

Of course, within these personalities there is a continuum and many other factors. Each of us tends to express one of these personality types dominantly, and that affects the way we communicate and work in groups. Even if the dominant personalities of two people conflict, knowing about personality types can help them to communicate effectively, understand each other, and operate better as a team. Reflecting on tendencies, habits, and preferences helps us figure out what dominant personality type we are. This leads to understanding how to adapt to others.

Different People, Different Personalities

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: ARCHETYPE GAME *

TIME

10-20 minutes

MATERIALS

Music or drum

Activity Description

Participants spread out around the room, each standing tall.

On a slow count of four, they grow into a statue that represents a specific archetype or character, such as a king or queen. See list below for examples of different archetypes.

With music playing (or drum sounding), ask participants to move the way their archetype or character would move. When you say "Freeze" or the music/drum stops, all participants stop and stand tall. Start over with a different archetype.

Participants must give each other space when they are moving around the room. No touching, running, or talking is allowed. If an individual breaks the rules, he or she must sit out for one archetype before rejoining the game.

Discussion after the game can include questions such as:

- Which archetype was easy or natural for you?
- Which archetype was uncomfortable to act out?
- Did you have an archetype that was your favorite? Which one?
- When do we need to use each archetype in our life and when might one be dangerous? (e.g., Kind and Friendly around friends and family - careful when around strangers)
- When might an archetype get us into trouble? (e.g., The Trickster, when interviewing for a job or when company comes over for dinner).

Some Archetypes

- *The Trickster* - the sneaky self
- *The Warrior* - the fierce self
- *Prince or Princess* - the self connected with a sense of pride and elegance
- *Wise King or Queen* - the self who steps into responsibility or leadership
- *Monster* - the scary self
- *Angel* - the kind and giving self
- *The Content One* - the self who feels satisfied with who we are and our own personal gifts
- *Kind and Friendly One* - the social self
- *Bear or the Hermit in the Cave* - the self that takes time to be alone
- *Peaceful One* - the quiet, contemplative self
- *Clown* - the silly self
- *Courageous Explorer* - the self who faces adversity

Coach's Notes

If someone is having a difficult time participating, he or she can be the one to control the music or play the drum.

* Activity adapted from Yoga Calm for Children, www.yogacalm.org and used with permission.

Bullying, Cyberbullying and Peer Pressure

Key Messages

I will identify my strength and think about ways I can use it to help in my life.
I have a trusted person in my life I can talk to if I'm involved in bullying or cyberbullying.
I can say no with my body and my words to anything that makes me feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Background

Bullying has come into the spotlight as a serious societal issue in the last few years. Although bullying has existed for a long time, advancing technology and higher exposure to violence through TV and videogames have given bullying and cyberbullying a newly predominant role. Bullying is characterized by unwanted, aggressive, repetitive behavior that illustrates a power imbalance between two people. If someone is mean once or even twice, this does not necessarily constitute bullying. Consistent repetition of the behavior, intent, and a power imbalance (physical, social or emotional) exist in a bullying relationship. There are different ways bullying is carried out including

- Verbal bullying - using spoken or written words. Name-calling, teasing, inappropriate comments and threatening to cause harm are all included in verbal bullying.
- Social or relational bullying - using someone's relationships or reputation to bully. Telling others not to be friends with someone, leaving someone out on purpose, spreading rumors, mimicking unkindly, and embarrassing someone in public on purpose are included in social bullying.
- Physical bullying - using the body to harm others. Hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, tripping, pushing, taking someone's things or breaking them, and rude hand gestures are all included in physical bullying.
- Cyberbullying - bullying using the internet. Cyberbullying can include all of the above, but with the addition of the internet - especially social media - or the phone (both calls and texts).

Under no circumstances is bullying okay. Bullying and cyberbullying can have profound impacts on someone's life. They can wreak havoc on self-esteem, trigger high amounts of stress, and cause extreme social isolation. All these factors combined create a lasting trauma that impacts both the body and the brain. Repetitive harmful negative speech, repetitive physical harm, repetitive isolation or rumor-spreading, and repetitive attacks via cyberspace are all forms of bullying that are intolerable.

Bullying, Cyberbullying and Peer Pressure

If someone is being bullied, including yourself, it's important to take these steps:

- Save any evidence. In cyberbullying, it's easy to save evidence on a computer, smartphone or tablet. Additionally, anyone that witnessed the bullying or cyberbullying can assist in providing evidence. Taking this evidence to a trusted adult will help to solve the problem.
- Block someone who is cyberbullying. Blocking someone on social media takes the simple click of a few buttons or prompts. Although we can't always literally block real life people, it is possible to completely ignore what they are saying or doing to bully and tell a trusted adult immediately.
- Practice positive self-esteem and self-image to gain courage to stand up against bullying. Whether one is being bullied or is a bystander, it's important to find the courage to stand up against bullying - it could even save a life.
- Send appropriate messages, posts, pictures and links via cell phones and the internet. While it's tempting to send something that seems funny, it's not always funny to the person receiving the message. A good rule of thumb to follow when sending messages, posts, pictures or links to someone is to ask, "Would I want my mom, dad, employer, teacher or coach to see this?" If the answer to that question is "no," then it's not appropriate to send to anyone.

Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is social pressure on an individual member, or a couple of members, from a peer group. Peer pressure can be both positive and negative. Positive peer pressure can be good by stimulating interest in new experiences, extracurriculars, books, music, or developing new skills. On the other hand, peer pressure can potentially have a negative impact on one's life. Peers can also sometimes encourage each other to make poor decisions, such as encouragement to cheat, steal, smoke, use drugs or alcohol, and other risky behaviors.

People often give in to peer pressure when they want to fit in with their peers or avoid feeling left out. Sometimes wanting to be liked can tempt people to make decisions they might not make if they were on their own. Making poor decisions can cause stress or other negative feelings about oneself and can have long-term negative effects. Making poor decisions as a result of peer pressure can cause low self-esteem, adoption of dangerous habits, damage to relationships with family and friends, shame, and depression.

There are two different types of peer pressure to be aware of. Direct Peer Pressure can be as simple as someone, or a group of people, directly telling others what to do. Indirect Peer Pressure is a less obvious form of peer pressure. Wanting to be liked or spending time with a particular group might lead one to engage in behaviors that the group engage in together.

Here are a few ways to handle peer pressure:

Say no to negative peer pressure. When being pressured to make poor decisions or engage in risky behaviors, it's absolutely okay to say no.

Value constructive common interests. Constructive shared hobbies are a great way to spend time with friends, without feeling pressured to make bad choices.

Leave the situation if it's risky or uncomfortable. It's important to feel safe and comfortable in order to avoid stress. If a situation is risky or uncomfortable, leaving is absolutely okay and encouraged.

Finding a strong voice, being honest, and having a high self-esteem will help anyone to avoid negative peer pressure.

Bullying, Cyberbullying and Peer Pressure

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: STRONG VOICE*

TIME

10-15 minutes

MATERIALS

Copies of “Strong Voice” worksheet for all participants

Pen/pencil

Optional- quiet music

Activity Description

Sitting in chairs, allow participants to close their eyes. Take a few breaths together as a group to turn awareness inside.

Slowly read the sentences from the “Strong Voice” worksheet, pausing long enough for individuals to process the ideas that come into their minds.

After reading, ask participants to open their eyes and write down their answers on the worksheet. This should be done without talking.

Allow participants to share their responses with their partner or the whole group.

Coach's Notes

Participants can work with their partner if they need assistance with writing. Discuss how strength can be used when one is angry. Give role models such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who used his anger and strength together for positive change. Discuss how strength can be used in negative ways and how we can keep this from happening.

* Activity adapted from Yoga Calm for Children, www.yogacalm.org and used with permission.

Bullying, Cyberbullying and Peer Pressure

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: HARASSMENT PREVENTION*

TIME

10-20 minutes

MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper
Markers**

Activity Description

Ask a volunteer to come to the front of the room and slowly chase you. As the individual is chasing you, laugh and tease and say “stop” in a playful way.

Ask participants why this didn’t work very well. They know that it is because the person being chased was giving a double message.

Write this on the board:

Double Message

- My language said, “Stop.”
- My body language said, “Keep going, I’m having fun.”

Ask participants which message they believe. Most will say they believe the body.

Discuss double messages that people sometimes send. Then go over the following steps for addressing harassment. After explaining the steps, have two volunteers practice chasing each other (slowly) and demonstrate the process of sticking up for oneself. Steps to stopping harassment:

- In a kind way, tell the person to stop.
- Say it again. This time, ground your feet, use your strong voice, and say the person’s name.
- Give a warning - for example, “I’m going to tell someone,” or “I’m going to walk away.” Ask the group what else they can say.
- Tell someone or follow through with the warning.
- You may have to do this many times before a person will stop the harassing behavior. Keep trying, and believe in yourself.

Coach’s Notes

This activity may be helpful to do in combination with the “Strong Voice” activity.

* Activity adapted from Yoga Calm for Children, www.yogacalm.org and used with permission.

STRONG VOICE WORKSHEET

Can you find the strong voice inside of you?

Where do you feel the strong voice in your body?

Is the voice high or low?

Is the voice loud or soft?

Does the voice make you think of someone?

What does the voice say?

What can you do to find your strong voice when you are angry or afraid?

When do you need your strong voice?

Draw a picture of yourself feeling strong on the back of this page.

Internet and Social Media: Safety and Perception

Key Messages

- The internet can be helpful and provide us with a lot of information.
- We need to be careful about who and what to trust on the internet.
- We need to be careful about what we post online in order to stay professional.

Background

As technology advances, people use the internet more and more. Many people use the internet to find out information about others, including new friends, potential employees, people associated with businesses, and more. Not many people realize that the new company they are interviewing with may be going to the internet for information about them, particularly their social lives. A person's association with another person or with an organization may be of interest to companies or individuals attempting to learn about them. This includes checking social media sites where pictures of them might be posted. Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram catalogue daily activities through posts, status updates, social events and pictures. That's why it's so important to keep an online presence professional - not only for your own sake, but also for the sake of anyone associated with you.

Remember, when a person is associated with an organization, such as Special Olympics, he or she is representing that organization. When people post things that are inappropriate, they are not only risking their own reputation, but the organization's reputation as well.

Everyone has what's called a "digital footprint." What is posted on social media and on the internet leaves traces behind forever. Often potential employers will look back at those digital footprints. This means that once information is out there in cyberspace, it stays there. Before something gets sent or posted, it's important that people consider the consequences. The potential audience is much larger than a person might think. Before putting a post or e-mail out there, consider what others might think of the content. If the content is questionable, everyone who is involved should give consent, or permission, before it gets sent into cyberspace.

While controlling images on the internet is important, it's even more important to stay safe from cybercrime. Cybercrime includes hackers searching for personal and financial information, as well as other crimes that are potentially even more dangerous.

Internet and Social Media: Safety and Perception

Don't:

Post unprofessional or inappropriate pictures.

Post statuses or tweets with inappropriate language, poor work habits, or criticisms of your employer.

Post status updates about everything you do - too much information can put you in a vulnerable position.

Post or share references to illegal drugs, guns, or alcohol.

Post or share sexual or discriminatory posts.

Share passwords or usernames.

Share other personal information, or respond to e-mails or other messages that inquire about personal information (Social Security number, bank account number, birth date, telephone number, or information about your family, school, work, or where you live).

Reply to or click on messages or links from strangers asking for information.

Send pictures of yourself, your home or anywhere else you frequently go.

Chat or e-mail with a stranger who makes you feel scared or uncomfortable.

Meet in person with a stranger you met online. No matter how long you chat with someone online, that person is still considered a stranger. People on the internet are not always honest about who they really are.

Do:

Post positive content that will make a good impression and create a positive digital footprint.

Be kind and respectful to others. Think of the internet as an extension of the world. Treat people on the internet or social media the same way you would treat them in person.

Use privacy settings for passwords and social media.

Make sure that websites you are shopping on are secure. They will have "https" in the web address and will also have a logo that looks like a lock.

Some games or apps that access your location services (GPS) can tell the wrong strangers where you are or where you are going. Make sure your location settings are private.

Be aware of the mood you are in when posting social media content.

Tell a trusted adult if a stranger contacts you through social media, e-mail, or another messaging service or website.

Tell someone if you feel uncomfortable about anything happening on the internet.

Internet and Social Media: Safety and Perception

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: GOOGLE YOURSELF!

TIME

30-45 minutes

MATERIALS

Internet Access
Internet-capable device (smartphone, tablet, computer, etc.)

Activity Description

Begin by entering your name into the Google search bar.

- See what comes up at first.
- Then, search your name in Google with other terms added, including risk words such as “address,” “e-mail address,” usernames for sites you use, your phone numbers, etc.
- Repeat the search process on other search engines, as well as sites that are designed to find people (whitepages.com, peoplefinder.com, etc.).
- Discuss. What did you search for? What did you find? How do you feel about what you found?
- Check privacy settings for any social media sites used, as well as e-mail and any other site that might contain personal information.

Coach's Notes

Bullying and cyberbullying are the focus of another lesson. They are certainly part of online safety. If you have time, teach these lessons together. Individuals may need help checking privacy settings, since the privacy setting is not always the same, or obvious, on every site. You can also show the videos *Four Reasons to Care About Your Digital Footprint* (https://youtu.be/Ro_LLrg8rGg) and *NS Teens - Friend or Fake?* (https://youtu.be/Nb1zAY_cc8o) on www.smore.com.

Key Contributors

Hillary Tyler Health Programs Manager, Special Olympics Minnesota

Benjamin Swarts Manager of Wellness Initiatives, Special Olympics Minnesota

Michael Kane Vice President of Area Programs and Initiatives, Special Olympics Minnesota

Becca Knight Marketing & Communications Specialist, Special Olympics Minnesota

Samantha Caswell Graphic Designer, Special Olympics Minnesota

Katie Thune MA Ed., Mad Hatter Wellness

Special Appreciation

Monica Forquer Manager of Fitness, Special Olympics

Kyle Washburn Director of Fitness, Special Olympics

Special Olympics Inc.

Special Olympics Minnesota

Anna Hayek

Rachel Saetre

Sara Saetre

Terri Steen

Mad Hatter Wellness

Aubin Pictures

Solar One

Yoga Calm

Resources Prevention Section

Ball S. A strength training program for your home. American College of Sports Medicine. <http://acsm.org/public-information/articles/2012/02/02/a-strength-training-program-for-your-home>. Published February 2, 2012. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Bay MJ., Lipkin PH. Intellectual disability: Prognosis and complications. MedMerits Corporation. http://www.medmerits.com/index.php/article/intellectual_disability/P10. Published 2011. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Boyle CA, Boulet S, Schieve L, Cohen RA, Blumberg SJ, Yeargin-Allsopp M, Visser S, Kogan MD. Key findings: Trends in the prevalence of developmental disabilities in US children, 1997–2008. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/features/birthdefects-dd-keyfindings.html>. Published February 12, 2015. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Carroll DD., Courtney-Long EA., Stevens AC., et al. Vital signs: Disability and physical activity – United States, 2009–2012. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6318a5.htm?s_cid=mm6318a5_w. Published May 9, 2014. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Center for Development Disability Studies. Health care in people with intellectual disability. North Sydney, NSW: Department of Health, 2006. http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/231514/Health_Care_in_People_with_Intellectual_Disability_Guidelines.pdf. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Children with disabilities and obesity. NCHPAD Building Healthy Inclusive Communities. <http://www.nchpad.org/433/5706/Children-with-Disabilities-and-Obesity>. Published 2015. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Down syndrome. NCHPAD Building Healthy Inclusive Communities. <http://www.nchpad.org/117/919/Down-Syndrome>. Published 2015. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. How to create a specific exercise program for athletes with disabilities. NCHPAD Building Healthy Inclusive Communities. <http://www.nchpad.org/968/5159/How-to-Create-a-Specific-Exercise-Program-for-Athletes-with-Disabilities>. Published 2015. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Cooper S-A., McLean G., Guthrie B., et al. Multiple physical and mental health comorbidity in adults with intellectual disabilities: Population-based cross-sectional analysis. *BMC Family Practice*. 2015;16:110. doi:10.1186/s12875-015-0329-3.

Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. How much physical activity do children need? Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/children/index.htm>. Published June 4, 2015. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Fragala-Pinkham MA., Haley SM., Rabin J., Kharasch VS. A fitness program for children with disabilities. *Journal of the American Physical Therapy Association*. 2005;85(11):1182-1200.

Giampa SA., Hangen JP. Sports tips. American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine. http://www.stopsportsinjuries.org/files/pdf/AOSSM_sportsnutrition.pdf. Published 2011. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Health Grades Inc. Prevalence statistics for types of intellectual or developmental disabilities. Right Diagnosis. http://www.rightdiagnosis.com/i/intellectual_or_developmental_disabilities/prevalence-types.htm. Published August 13, 2015. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Healthwise, Incorporated. Neck exercises – Topic overview. WebMD. <http://www.webmd.com/pain-management/tc/neck-exercises-topic-overview>. Published September 9, 2014. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Hill J., Leiszler M. Review and role of plyometrics and core rehabilitation in competitive sport. *Current Sports Medicine Reports*. 2011;10(6):345-351. doi: 10.1249/JSR.0b013e31823b3b94.

Hinton PS. Improving your nutrition in four simple steps. American College of Sports Medicine. <http://acsm.org/public-information/articles/2012/02/02/improving-your-nutrition-in-four-simple-steps>. Published February 2, 2012. Accessed November 30, 2015.

<http://ptjournal.apta.org/content/85/11/1182.full.pdf+html?sid=fd50b633-deaa-4e5e-80fa-de813ccb22a9>. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Karriem-Norwood V. Gym smarts: Stretching [Video]. WebMD. <http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/video/gym-smarts-stretching-hamstrings-calves>. Published May 27, 2012. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Mayo Clinic Staff. Stretching: Focus on flexibility. Mayo Clinic. <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/stretching/art-20047931?pg=1>. Published March 4, 2014. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Millar AL. Improving your flexibility and balance. American College of Sports Medicine. <http://acsm.org/public-information/articles/2012/02/02/improving-your-flexibility-and-balance>. Published February 20, 2012. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Nadelon MD. Basic injury prevention concepts. American College of Sports Medicine. <http://acsm.org/public-information/articles/2012/01/10/basic-injury-prevention-concepts>. Published January 10, 2012. Accessed November 30, 2015.

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Division of Human Development and Disability. Adults with disabilities. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/disabilities/>. Published May 2014. Accessed November 30, 2015.

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Division of Human Development and Disability. Obesity and people with disabilities. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/documents/obesity-tip-sheet_-phpa_1.pdf. Published October 26, 2015. Accessed November 30, 2015.

National Institutes of Health. Handout on health: Sports injuries. National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases. http://www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/Sports_Injuries/#ra_7. Published November 2013. Accessed November 30, 2015.

National Institutes of Health. Preventing musculoskeletal sports injuries in youth: A guide for parents. National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases. http://www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/Sports_Injuries/child_sports_injuries.asp. Published June 2013. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Olsen O-E., Myklebust G., Engebretsen L., et al. Exercises to prevent lower limb injuries in youth sports: Cluster randomized controlled trial. *British Medical Journal*. 2005;330(7489):449. doi: 10.1136/bmj.38330.632801.8F.

Parr BB. Living with diabetes. American College of Sports Medicine. <http://acsm.org/public-information/articles/2012/01/19/living-with-diabetes>. Published January 19, 2012. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Perry SB., Downey PA. Fracture risk and prevention: A multidimensional approach. *Journal of the American Physical Therapy Association*. 2012;92(1):164-178. doi: 10.2522/ptj.20100383.

Rankin JW. Clearing up common nutrition myths. American College of Sports Medicine. <http://acsm.org/public-information/articles/2012/01/09/clearing-up-common-nutrition-myths>. Published January 9, 2012. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Schmidt S. Obesity and exercise. American College of Sports Medicine. <http://acsm.org/public-information/articles/2012/01/19/obesity-and-exercise>. Published January 19, 2012. Accessed November 30, 2015.

The Arc. Intellectual disability. The Arc. For People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. <http://www.thearc.org/learn-about/intellectual-disability>. Published 2015. Accessed November 30, 2015.

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Digest of education statistics: 2013. National Center for Education Statistics. <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=64>. Published May 2015. Accessed November 30, 2015.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health. What are symptoms of Fragile X syndrome? Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/fragilex/conditioninfo/Pages/commonsymptoms.aspx>. Published October 29, 2013. Accessed November 30, 2015.

WebMD, LLC. Living with low back pain [Video] WebMD. <http://www.webmd.com/back-pain/living-with-low-back-pain-11/five-back-pain-stretches>. Published 2015. Accessed November 30, 2015.

WebMD, LLC. The truth about stretching. WebMD. <http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/guide/how-to-stretch?page=2>. Published 2012. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Westcott WL. Resistance training is medicine: Effects of strength training on health. *Current Sports Medicine Reports*. 2012;11(4):209-216. doi: 10.1249/JSR.0b013e31825dabb8.

Wickline S. CDC reports on disability, chronic disease. MedPage Today. <http://www.medpagetoday.com/PrimaryCare/GeneralPrimaryCare/45626>. Published May 6, 2014. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Witvrouw E., Mahieu N., Danneels L., McNair P. Stretching and injury prevention: An obscure relationship. *Sports Medicine*. 2004;34(7):443-449. <http://www.ohio.edu/people/hoffmar1/injury%20Prevention/stretchingandinjuryprevention.pdf>. Accessed November 30, 2015.

Social Wellness

Active Listening
Cortright, SM. 10 tips to effective & active listening skills. Power to Change. <http://powertochange.com/students/people/listen/>. Accessed November 20, 2015.

Mind Tools Editorial Team. Active listening: Hear what people are really saying. Mind Tools. <https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/ActiveListening.htm>. Accessed November 20, 2015.

SkillsYouNeed. Listening skills. SkillYouNeed: Helping You Develop Life Skills. <http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/listening-skills.html>. Accessed November 20, 2015.

Healthy Active Lifestyle

Break the Cycle. (2014). Activity Guides. Retrieved from https://www.breakthecycle.org/sites/default/files/Break%20the%20Cycle%20Activity%20Guides_0.pdf

Pegg A. 5 healthy alternatives to common social activities. Steady Strength. <http://steadystrength.com/5-healthy-alternatives-to-common-social-activities/>. Published July 10, 2013. Accessed November 20, 2015.

Healthy Social Skills

AnxietyBC. (2016). Effective Communication - Improving your Social Skills. Retrieved from <https://www.anxietybc.com/self-help/effective-communication-improving-your-social-skills>

CDC. (2017). Healthy Communication Skills. Retrieved from <http://headsap.scholastic.com/sites/default/files/Healthy-Communication-Guide-CDC.pdf>

CDC. (2017). Talking Points for Healthy, Unhealthy, and Unsafe Relationship Behaviors. Retrieved from <http://headsap.scholastic.com/sites/default/files/Relationship-Talking-Points-CDC.pdf>

Hall Center Health Promotion Staff. (2014, January). Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships. Retrieved from <http://depts.washington.edu/hhpccweb/health-resource/healthy-vs-unhealthy-relationships/>

Women's and Children's Health Networks. Social skills. Kids' Health. <http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=287&id=2905>. Published February 5, 2015. Accessed November 20, 2015.

Internet and Social Media Perception

Baum, M. (2016, August 08). Appropriate Uses of Social Media. Retrieved from <https://www.smores.com/v81jq-appropriate-uses-of-social-media>

- Davidson J. The 7 social media mistakes most likely to cost you a job. Money. <http://time.com/money/3510967/jobvite-social-media-profiles-job-applicants/>. Published October 16, 2014. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- Driscoll E. What your social media reputation says to employers. Fox Business. <http://www.foxbusiness.com/personal-finance/2013/06/03/what-your-social-media-reputation-says-to-employers/>. Published June 3, 2013. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- Federal Trade Commission. (2017). Consumer Information. Retrieved from <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0003-educators>
- Gordon Cooper Technology Center. (2012). Appropriate Online Behavior Social Networking Etiquette Cyber Bullying Awareness. Retrieved from http://www.gctech.edu/sites/gordoncooper/uploads/documents/Appropriate_Online_Behavior.pdf
- Greer, J. May 12, 2010. 5 Do's and Don'ts for College Students Using Social Media. Retrieved from <https://www.usnews.com/education/articles/2010/05/12/5-dos-and-donts-for-college-students-using-social-media>
- Hernandez JH. 6 social media mistakes to avoid while job seeking. CareerRealism. <http://www.careerealism.com/social-media-mistakes-job-seeking/>. Published December 21, 2103. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- Internet Safety
Bruce DF. Teen internet safety tips. WebMD. <http://teens.webmd.com/features/teen-internet-safety-tips>. Published 2007. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- New M. Online safety. Teens Health. http://kidshealth.org/teen/safety/safebasics/internet_safety.html#. Published October 2014. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- Rogers T. Brand yourself: How reporters promote themselves and their work online. About News. <http://journalism.about.com/od/careersinjournalism/fl/Brand-Yourself-How-Reporters-Promote-Themselves-and-Their-Work-Online.htm>. Published 2015. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- Mindfulness – Being Present
Dixit J. Back to the present: How to live in the moment. Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/brainstorm/200812/back-the-present-how-live-in-the-moment>. Published December 17, 2008. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- Stone J. 5 steps to a clearer mind. Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/clear-organized-and-motivated/201402/5-steps-clearer-mind>. Published February 9, 2014. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- What is mindfulness? Greater Good The Science of a Meaningful Life. <http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/mindfulness/definition>. Published 2015. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- Personality Types
Lee, K. The 4 personality types: How to appeal to everyone. Work Awesome. <http://workawesome.com/communication/4-personality-types/>. Published October 2, 2013. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- Rachel. Dealing with different personality types in the workplace. Today Magazine. <http://www.today-magazine.com/lifestyles/dealing-different-personality-types-workplace/>. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- Changing Minds. (2016). Social Styles. Retrieved from http://changingminds.org/explanations/preferences/social_styles.htm
- Cuncic, A., & Our Everyday Life. (2017). Merrill Reid Social Styles. Retrieved from <http://oureverydaylife.com/merrill-reid-social-styles-8556293.html>
- LEAD, & Leadership Excellence for Academic Diversity. (2017). Assumptions About Personal Styles. Retrieved from <https://www.engr.washington.edu/lead/PostedMaterials/Social%20Styles/Tab4colorPulsarPink-SocialStyles.pdf>
- Timur Tiryaki Success Academy. (2015). Personality Categories (Social Behavior Types). Retrieved from <http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/Personality%20Categories.pdf>
- Physical Wellness
Importance of Sleep
Division of Adult and Community Health. Insufficient sleep among Minnesota adults. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. http://www.cdc.gov/sleep/pdf/states/Insufficient_Sleep_Fact_Sheet_2011_MN.pdf. Published 2012. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. How much sleep is enough? National Instituted of Health. <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/topics/topics/sdd/howmuch>. Published February 22, 2012. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- Nutritional Wellness
Alcoholic Beverages – Effects and Moderation
Drinkware. Alcohol and liver disease. Drinkware.co.uk. <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/check-the-facts/health-effects-of-alcohol/effects-on-the-body/alcohol-and-your-health>. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. When to avoid alcohol use. <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/alcohol/art-20044551?pg=2>. Published February 11, 2014. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- National Institutes of Health. Alcohol's effects on the body. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/alphahols-effects-body>. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). National Teach-In Prevent: Underage Alcohol Use. Retrieved from <https://www.toosmartostart.samhsa.gov/media/LessonPlan.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Drink alcohol only in moderation. Healthfinder.gov. http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/health-conditions-and-diseases/heart-health/drink-alcohol-only-in-moderation#the-basics_1. Updated February 25, 2016 Accessed November 20, 2015.
- Zelman, K. Low-calorie cocktails. WebMD. <http://www.webmd.com/diet/low-calorie-cocktails?page=3>. Updated 2007. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- Navigating the Grocery Store
James SP. Office of nutrition research. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. <http://dnrc.nih.gov/education-monthly-nav-grocery-store.asp>. Accessed November 30, 2015.
- Western Marine Community Action (WMCA). Navigating the grocery store: Tips for successful shopping. WMCA Helping People: Changing Lives. http://wmca.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/WMCA_Tips_for_Navigating_the_Grocery_Store.pdf. Accessed November 30, 2015.
- Preparing Meals for the Week
Allina Health systems 2015). Health Fueled by Fun Retrieved from <http://www.healthpoweredkids.org/>
- CNN. (2015, June 30). Sweet comparisons: How much sugar is in that drink? Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2014/07/02/health/gallery/sugar-sweetened-beverages/index.html>
- Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. Planning meals. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/meals.html. Updated May 15, 2015. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- Harvard University. Healthy eating plate & healthy eating pyramid. School of Public Health. <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-eating-plate/>. Accessed November 20, 2015.
- <http://peanutbutterlovers.com/pb-lovers/pb101/how-its-made/>
- Southern Peanut Growers. (2017). How It's Made. Retrieved from Vermont Department of Health. Are you a healthy eater? Department of Health: Agency of Human Services. <http://healthvermont.gov/eatforhealth/index.aspx>. Accessed November, 20, 2015.
- Weaver, L., DR. (2015, January 20). Hunger Vs. Appetite: What's The Difference?. Retrieved from <http://www.foodmatters.com/article/hunger-vs-appetite-whats-the-difference>
- Emotional Wellness
Breathing Exercises
Mayo Clinic. (2017, April 19). Relaxation techniques: Try these steps to reduce stress. Retrieved from <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/relaxation-technique/art-20045368?pg=2>
- Robinson, L., Segal, R., Segal J., & Smith, M. Relaxation techniques for stress relief. HelpGuide.org. <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/relaxation-techniques-for-stress-relief.htm>. Updated April 2016. Accessed April 21, 2016.
- Shakeshaft, J. 6 breathing exercises to relax in 10 minutes or less. TIME. <http://healthland.time.com/2012/10/08/6-breathing-exercises-to-relax-in-10-minutes-or-less/>. Published October 8, 2012. Accessed April 21, 2016.
- Bullying and Cyberbullying
Robinson L., Segal JS. Dealing with cyberbullying: Tips for kids and parents to prevent and stop cyberbullying. HelpGuide.Org. <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/abuse/cyberbullying.htm>. Published September 2015. Accessed November 30, 2015.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Bullying definition. Stopbullying.gov. <http://www.stopbullying.gov/index.html>. Published November 16, 2015. Accessed November 30, 2015.
- Effects of Stress on Personality
Alban, D. (2017, May 16). 15 Stress Management Techniques That Work Well ... and Fast. Retrieved from <https://bebrainfit.com/stress-management-techniques/>
- American Psychological Association. (2017). Five Tips to Help Manage Stress. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/manage-stress.aspx>
- DiscoveryHealth.com. How do personality types impact people's responses to stress? HowStuffWorks. <http://health.howstuffworks.com/wellness/stress-management/personality-types-impact-on-response-to-stress.htm>. Published 2015. Accessed November 30, 2015.
- Forrester F. How you personality effects the way you deal with stress. Pure Life NutriMedics: Improving The Quality of Your Life. <http://www.purelifenutrimedics.com/blog/how-your-personality-effects-the-way-you-deal-with-stress>. Published March 12, 2012. Accessed November 30, 2015.
- Mills H., Reiss N., Dombeck M. Mental and emotional impact of stress. MentalHealth.net. <https://www.mentalhelp.net/articles/mental-and-emotional-impact-of-stress/>. Published June 30, 2008. Accessed November 30, 2015.
- The American Institute of Stress. (2017, January 04). Management Tips. Retrieved from <https://www.stress.org/management-tips/>
- Self-esteem
Coaching Positive Performance. (2017, March 01). The truth about low self-esteem. Retrieved from <http://www.coachingpositiveperformance.com/the-truth-about-low-self-esteem/>
- Ireland, K. (2015, April 26). Activities to Boost a Teen's Self Esteem. Retrieved from <http://www.livestrong.com/article/126741-activities-boost-self-esteem-teen/>
- Psychology Today. (2017). Self-Esteem. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/self-esteem>
- Skills You Need. (2017). Improving Self-Esteem. Retrieved from <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/self-esteem.html>
- University of Texas: Counseling and Mental Health Center. (2017). Self-Esteem.
University of Texas at Austin. Retrieved from <https://cmhc.utexas.edu/selfesteem.html>

