

8 Dimensions of Wellness

Lesson Plan for Grades 6-12



Background to the 8 Dimensions of Wellness

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) defines wellness as the development of 8 distinct areas of wellbeing to achieve optimum health. Often, we think of wellness as including exercise and nutrition, or more broadly, physical health. The 8 Dimensions of Wellness acknowledges that it takes more than physical health, or an absence of illness, to achieve optimum wellness. The 8 dimensions are: *physical, intellectual, financial, environmental, spiritual, social, occupational, and emotional*. These are broadly defined in recognition of cultural differences found in the nuances of each dimension.

Utilizing the **8 Dimensions of Wellness**, students identify areas that may need some attention. Creating a wellness goal will help students focus on what they have control over in their lives and could prevent them from substance use or mental health crises as a long-term outcome. As with any goal, this is meant to be a starting point for improved health and well-being. Ultimately, this is about raising awareness and developing strategies for the whole life. No single dimension, in its fullness or need for development, will equate to overall wellness. It is the interplay of the dimensions that creates lifelong health and well-being.

- This brief video explains the 8 Dimensions of Wellness:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NR4_5dt7JA

Goals for the 8 Dimensions of Wellness Lesson

This lesson is geared towards middle and high school students. There are some resources available on the internet, but most are created for an adult audience. This lesson introduces the concept of wellness as multi-faceted and requiring active engagement through the whole life. It also places ownership in the hands of students in a time of so much uncertainty. This can build resiliency in the face of additional stress.

After completing this unit, students will better understand:

- 1) The various aspects of wellness, as defined by SAMHSA's 8 Dimensions of Wellness
- 2) The value of holistic health and well-being.
- 3) How to access additional resources for continual learning.
- 4) The steps involved in setting and achieving a wellness goal.

Activity: Examples *in italics*, below

- 1) **Students write down, in their own words, the definition of "wellness"**
Wellness is developing healthy behaviors.
- 2) Watch the **8 Dimensions of Wellness** introductory video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NR4_5dt7JA

3) **Students look back at their definition and make changes, if any, to a new understanding of “wellness”**

Wellness is developing healthy behaviors that include all 8 dimensions and that no single dimension is more important than another, but when more of them are developed, the healthier I will be

4) **Students answer the following questions:**

- A) What actions do people do to improve their well-being?
They exercise, save money, eat well, have good relationships with their friends and family
- B) What risks do people take with their personal wellness and why?
Sometimes people do not eat well, or get enough sleep, especially when they are stressed
- C) What are some benefits of you taking steps to be in greater control of your well-being?
When I think about what I can do to better my well-being, I start to feel less anxiety about the future because I feel more in control of what happens to me
- D) What are some potential outcomes of not paying attention to personal wellness in any one or multiple dimensions?
It is easier to become sick or to lose your job and then not have money that is needed to survive if people don't work on their different wellness dimensions, specifically physical, occupational, and financial

5) **Students complete a wellness assessment:** Get the downloadable PDF [here](https://envisionpartnerships.org/what-we-do/8-dimensions-of-wellness/).
<https://envisionpartnerships.org/what-we-do/8-dimensions-of-wellness/>

6) **Setting a wellness goal:**

- A) Students use SAMHSA’s **8 Dimensions of Wellness** Activities PDF to look through which one dimension they want to focus on;
<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Creating-a-Healthier-Life-/SMA16-4958>
- B) Students create a SMART goal

My goal is to work on my social wellness.

<i>S: Specific</i>	<i>I want to work on staying connected to my teammates, even though we can't practice and compete together right now</i>
<i>M: Measurable</i>	<i>I will interact with my teammates through phone calls or virtual meetings at least twice a week</i>
<i>A: Achievable</i>	<i>It is achievable to talk with my teammates once on the weekend and once through the weekdays</i>
<i>R: Relevant</i>	<i>By connecting with my teammates, we can talk about our season goals and plan how we will recognize our seniors. We can also talk about how our training is going at home and it will make me feel more motivated to continue working out, which improves my physical wellness, too.</i>
<i>T: Time-bound</i>	<i>I will create an account to host a virtual meeting in the next two days and have our first call within five days of setting this goal.</i>

C) Students write down what could impede achieving that goal

I could get nervous about putting myself out there and decide that if they wanted to talk to me, they would have called by now. Or, it could be really difficult to get everyone on the same virtual meeting at the same time.

D) Lastly, students create methods to overcome those challenges

I will remind myself that if I'm nervous and I'm a junior, then it's likely that at least the freshmen and sophomores are also nervous about reaching out and maybe that's why I haven't heard anything. I will try my best to get everyone on the same call, but if people can't or don't want to join at that time, I'll still make the effort to hold it. Hopefully, we could get more to attend the next one, since I plan to do this regularly.

Summarize:

By learning about and creating a goal that focuses on the **8 Dimensions of Wellness**, students (and teachers!) now have a better understanding that wellness encompasses lots of areas of our life. By doing the self-assessment, we are able to identify one or more dimension that we can focus on right now to increase our overall wellness. Setting a SMART goal helps to set us up for success. Equally important is to identify what can get in the way, because often times, things do get in the way of our goals.

By thinking through the barriers to achieving a goal, we can also create solutions when they inevitable do arise. All of this is practice for assessing our overall health and well-being and then creating progress goals throughout life so that we are consistently striving to be healthier individuals, which will also help us be better family members, boy/girl-friends, co-workers, and neighbors. This activity gives us something positive to focus on and offers some control over our lives that, right now especially, can feel completely out of control. It builds resilience in us, and we can encourage the people in our household to do the same, thus making us all more resilient together.

For extra credit, students can participate in the **8 Dimensions of Wellness Creative Arts Contest**, presented by Envision Partnerships and the Butler County Mental Health and Addiction Recovery Services (MHARS) Board. Information is found at <https://envisionpartnerships.org/what-we-do/8-dimensions-of-wellness/>

Contest timeline: **April 27**- opens for submissions; **May 22**- contest closes