

Part D: Introduction to Personal Wellness

## Developing a Wellness Learning Plan

### Developing an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) For Wellness

Striving for wellness during medical training is important, and acquiring methods to maintain wellness can help trainees learn to adopt life-long strategies for maintaining satisfaction and joy in their careers.

We suggest that just as residents develop an ILP for career development, they also develop an annual wellness ILP and review it with their advisor. Posting this plan in a visible place in the home will help remind the individual of its content.

Potential content for the Wellness Learning Plan (WLP) may include the following strategies and content themes that have been written about in the literature, based on data gathered from surveys and individual reflections from internal medicine faculty, primary care providers, hospice workers and residents (1-6).

#### Strategies for Well Being and Self-care

In order to maintain our work as humanistic providers, we must be nourished ourselves. We need to strive for wellbeing by taking care of ourselves. Wellness goes beyond the absence of distress. It is an active state that includes being challenged and thriving in our personal as well as our professional lives.

For **“In the Moment” Well Being**, you should consider what strategies to utilize when feeling frustrated or stressed at work and you are having difficulty thinking clearly or behaving appropriately. Examples are walking away, taking a few long breaths.

For **“After an Event” Well Being**, what strategies will you use after a disturbing event has occurred? Examples are talk to a trusted colleague, sing or play a favorite song, do something nice for yourself.

The main domains for Long Term Well Being promotion include:

- 1. Approaches to life.** Examples include finding meaning in your work, maintaining perspective, and a sense of humor, taking time to celebrate successes and having a daily release ritual to let go of the day’s concerns. This might include exercise or playing a particular piece of music.
- 2. Emotional and cognitive approaches.** Taking time to grieve losses, and having time alone and for reflection. Developing skill in awareness of individual warning signs of stress and frustration and developing mechanisms to address them. Perhaps it also involves reaching out to others who you suspect may be having a difficult time.
- 3. Relationships with others.** This includes staying connected with family and friends, giving yourself permission to say no to additional opportunities and protecting time with family and friends.
- 4. Spirituality.** This domain includes not necessarily a specific faith tradition, but rather a belief in something bigger than yourself or contributions made to the greater good.
- 5. Promotion of self-care.** Self-care means to pay attention to one’s own physical and emotional needs and include active ways to keep yourself well. These may include exercise, yoga, good nutrition, sleep hygiene, addressing your medical and mental health care, finding time to relax, taking vacations and finding interests outside of medicine such as sports, music, cooking, gardening, or hobbies.

## **Resilience in the Face of Grief and Loss:**

*A Curriculum for Pediatric Learners*

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On the following page, you will find a template to adapt for your own use. In your development of a wellness plan, remember that you are taking an individual and personal journey! Strategies for maintenance of wellbeing must be individualized, so include only the strategies that you think will work for you. Some individuals will likely place most weight on social relationships, while others may be nurtured more by spiritual activities or activities they can do on their own. As you proceed with implementing your plan, change the strategies as needed, depending on your experience. Each of us must find the strategies that work for us.

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<b>Individual Wellness Learning Plan</b>				
<i>Note: Be sure to include "in the moment", "after an event", and long-term strategies.</i>				
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Goals</b>	<b>How I will achieve my goals</b>	<b>Indicators of Success</b>	<b>Notes on Progress (with dates)</b>
Approaches to life				
Emotional & cognitive approaches				
Relationships with others				
Spirituality				
Promotion of self-care				