

Turning a New Leaf



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The 8 Dimensions of Wellness

by Steven Butera, Executive Director

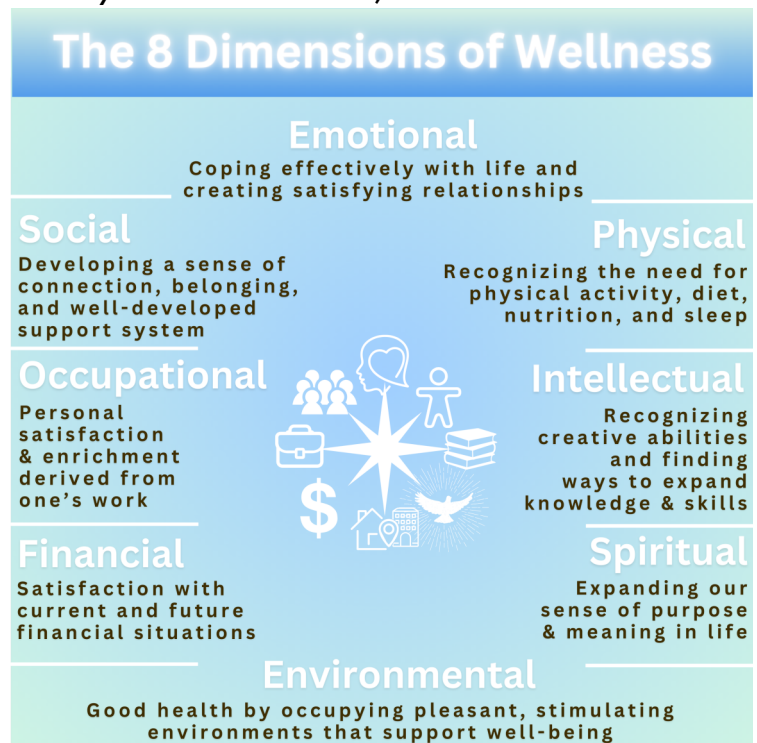
In Psychology, we have come to understand that for a person to flourish, there are 8 pillars (or dimensions) of their life that need to be considered and addressed. They are called the '8 Dimensions of Wellness', and each dimension can affect overall quality of life. Through its Wellness Initiative, SAMHSA (Substance Abuse, & Mental Health Services Administration) encourages individuals, organizations, and communities to work toward longer, healthier, and happier lives, particularly among people living with behavioral health conditions. The Eight Dimensions of Wellness take into account not only an individual's physical health, but all the factors that contribute to a person's overall wellbeing. When each dimension is effectively addressed, flourishing will likely be happening. (See infographic to the right)

Let's take a minute to define wellness/flourishing. Wellness or flourishing is about how we live our lives and the joy, fulfillment, and health we experience. Flourishing encompasses multiple dimensions of our lives, including emotional, physical, occupational, intellectual, financial, social, environmental, and spiritual aspects. Also, creating balance in our lives is crucial for overall wellness, and this can be achieved by engaging in activities that bring us joy and fulfillment, such as work, leisure, spending time in prayer, going to church, spending time with loved ones, and taking care of our physical and mental health.

In our efforts to flourish, we need to be intentional about our choices and make decisions that help us progress in each area. Establishing routines and habits that support our wellness goals and values is essential for maintaining balance and satisfaction in our lives.

Improving our physical, intellectual, and financial wellness is crucial for overall well-being. This can be achieved through activities such as eating a healthy diet, engaging in regular physical activity, getting enough sleep, engaging our minds through intellectual pursuits, and managing our finances effectively.

Accessing clean air, food, and water is important for environmental wellness, as well as spending time outdoors and visiting public parks can contribute to a change of scenery and improve environmental wellness. Organizing and decluttering living and work spaces can enhance home and work environments and contribute to our sense of peace and wellbeing.



Finally, recognizing personal beliefs and values, and using spirituality to drive actions and thoughts is important for spiritual wellness. This is a significant factor that gives our lives meaning and purpose as well as connection to a Power higher than ourselves...to the God who created us.

When we have experienced difficulty, hardship, or trauma, support from others is important for our well-being, and seeking advice and guidance from individuals who have experienced similar challenges can provide us with a sense of community and empowerment. We may want to get help from a professional as well.

Having self-defined routines and habits can offer personal balance and satisfaction. Routine and habit is generally determined by our basic needs (nutrition/food, shelter, social affiliations, safety, etc.), and the various roles we occupy in society. Our habits affect what we eat, what we wear, how we relate to others, how we go to work, how we spend or save money, and more.

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The idea of flourishing is a significant theme in the Old Testament. According to Christian author Hugh Whelchel, biblical flourishing includes many facets such as salvation, wholeness, integrity, soundness, community, connectedness, justice, righteousness, and well-being. Flourishing denotes a right relationship with God, with others, and with God's good creation. Flourishing is the way God intended things to be when he created the universe.

Flourishing doesn't always mean the absence of difficulty or challenge, but it does involve wholeness and joy, representing God's intention for His creation. The Old Testament prophets pictured flourishing as the lion lying with the lamb, weapons becoming farming tools, deserts blooming, and the mountains streaming with red wine.

As Whelchel has noted, biblical flourishing is much different from the cultural definition that focuses on glorifying and pleasing ourselves:

"Biblical flourishing is missional, priestly, and outward focused, motivated to spread God's glory throughout the earth. We flourish when we help others flourish." (Jer. 29:4-7).

The Bible teaches us that from the very beginning, flourishing was part of God's design in creation. Scott Kauffmann writes, "flourishing bookends our existence: it characterizes both the Garden and the eternal City, and so provides the vision for our existence in between." Flourishing existed at the beginning of creation, and it is still where God wants us to be focused today.

At New Leaf Resources we believe the "why" of our work is to bring about biblical flourishing in the world, person by person. That is God's design and desire for His creation. God made everything based on a perfect design, and by the power of His will, that design will be realized.

The idea of flourishing in the Bible also provides an understanding of how a person can achieve it. God reveals through His word the design for our flourishing, then equips us to pursue it through His Holy Spirit, who empowers, restores, and reforms us by grace.

The gospel of Jesus Christ shows us what real flourishing is. His gospel calls us to embrace our identity in Christ and fulfill our calling. Thereby giving us a taste of flourishing in this world and guaranteeing our experience of it in its fullness in the world to come.

As the Apostle Paul writes, "...we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28). It is the good work of His grace that equips and enables the work of our hands to produce biblical flourishing and bring it to the communities we serve. That work is motivated by nothing more than our love for Him.

May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us -yes, establish the work of our hands (Ps. 90:17).

Each of us is created uniquely by God to contribute something to his kingdom. We have a special opportunity to use our unique interests and abilities to do something significant. In this way, when we are in Christ, flourishing becomes the vision and experience of us all.

God bless you,

Steve

Habits become ingrained in us—and are often tough to change. For example, we might put ourselves down or feel we need a particular thing or person to get us through a tough spot. We can learn otherwise. Developing new habits that support our flourishing can make a big difference.

Life demands, stress, crisis, or trauma can impact or alter our routines and habits. This can lead to emotional (anxiety, depression), social (cranky, isolated, angry), or physical (tired, agitated) imbalances.

Establishing new, better habits that support our wellness goals and values can be challenging, but worth it. Developing healthier routines and habits can lead to positive feelings (emotional), relationship satisfaction (social), increased energy (physical), inspiration (emotional), and a feeling that we are using our creative talents, skills, and abilities to engage in activities (occupational, intellectual, spiritual).

It is important to understand that flourishing incorporates dimensions of health that influence our total well-being and that all the dimensions of wellness are interconnected. The financial dimension, for example, might affect how we feel we can succeed socially. The occupational dimension may suffer if the intellectual dimension is being compromised. It is also true that one dimension may be of greater importance to us than another, and depending on where we are at developmentally, one dimension may become a larger focus at one time and a lesser focus at another. Research shows that when a person is able to accomplish goals related to each dimension, flourishing and well-being are more likely to occur.

The best ways to flourish and implement wellness into our lives include setting clear goals, prioritizing self-care, and establishing healthy habits. Developing and maintaining connections, relationships and seeking support are of critical importance. Identifying our spiritual values and practices that drive our behavior, establishing work-life balance, taking breaks and rest create a healthy rhythm in life. Practicing gratitude, engaging in lifelong learning, and monitoring and adjusting our progress are key. It is important to remember that flourishing and implementing wellness are a personal and individualized process, so it is essential to listen to our own needs and preferences and tailor our practices accordingly.

Finding what you need to flourish is not a solitary process. We often need help and support from others. Sometimes we may want to work with a therapist to help us navigate these eight dimensions and develop a goal plan. In fact, New Leaf Resources is developing a type of wellness “checkup” that could help you explore the dimensions and what may be holding you back from flourishing in your life. Stay tuned for more details!

RSVP to our Celebration Dinner, June 18th!

**Once a year, New Leaf Resources hosts our Celebration Dinner;
bringing our staff, our supporters, and members of our community together.
It's an evening to thank God and those He has worked through for blessing our ministry**

Celebration Dinner

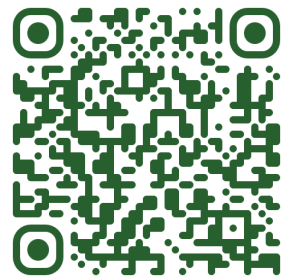
*June 18th, 6:30-8pm
doors open at 6*

*at Illiana Christian H.S.
10920 Calumet Ave, Dyer*

*No cost to attend. All costs for the evening are funded by business sponsors
There will be an opportunity to give to our Marty Doot Client Assistance Fund*

*Childcare provided!
with open gym,
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(include ages with RSVP)*

*Please RSVP by May 31st to: info@newleafresources.org
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