Chapter 1: Introduction to Wellness, Fitness, and Lifestyle Management

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, the student will be able to:
- Describe the dimensions of wellness.
- Identify the major health problems in the United States today.
- Describe the behaviors that are part of a fit and well lifestyle.
- Explain the steps in creating a behavior management plan to change a wellness-related behavior.
- List some of the available sources of wellness information, and explain how to think critically about them.

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Environmental Wellness Your environmental wellness is defined by the livability of your surroundings. Personal health depends on the health of the planet – from the safety of the food supply to the degree of violence in society. Your physical environment either supports your wellness or diminishes it. To improve your environmental wellness, you can learn about and protect yourself against hazards in your surroundings and work to make your world a cleaner and safer place.

health The overall condition of body or mind, and the presence or absence of illness or injury.
wellness Optimal health and vitality encompassing the six dimensions of well-being.
risk factor A condition that increases one’s chances of disease or injury.
infectious disease A disease that can be spread from person to person; caused by microorganisms such as bacteria and viruses.
chronic disease A disease that develops and continues over a long period of time such as heart disease or cancer.
lifestyle choice A conscious behavior that can increase or decrease a person’s risk of disease or injury; such behaviors include smoking, exercising, eating a healthy diet, and others.
physical fitness A set of physical attributes that allow the body to respond or adapt to the demands and stress of physical effort.
Sedentary Physically inactive; literally, “sitting.”
unintentional injury An injury that occurs without harm being intended.
behavior change A lifestyle management process that involves cultivating healthy behaviors and working to overcome unhealthy ones.
target behavior An isolated behavior selected as the object for a behavior change program.
self-efficacy The belief in one’s ability to take action and perform a specific task.
locus of control The figurative “place” a person designates as the source of responsibility for the events in his or her life.
self-talk A person’s internal dialogue.

EXTENDED LECTURE OUTLINE

Introduction
Truly healthy people want optimal well-being rather than simply the absence of illness.

I. Wellness: The New Health Goal
   A. Generations of people have viewed health simply as the absence of disease.
   B. Wellness refers to optimal health and vitality – living life to its fullest.
      1. True wellness is largely determined by the decisions you make about the way you live.
   C. Making conscious decisions can affect the outcomes of your health due to risk factors i.e. smoking, sedentary lifestyle, diet, stress, etc.
   D. Experts have defined six interrelated dimensions of wellness that continually influence one another in a dynamic process of growth and change.
      1. Physical Wellness
         a. Your physical wellness includes not just your body’s overall condition and the absence of disease, but your fitness level and your ability to care for yourself.
         b. The decisions you make now, and the habits you develop over your lifetime, will largely determine the length and quality of your life.
      2. Emotional Wellness
         a. Your emotional wellness reflects your ability to understand and deal with your feelings.
         b. Emotional wellness involves listening to your own thoughts and feelings, monitoring your reactions, and identifying obstacles to emotional stability.
      3. Intellectual Wellness
         a. Those who enjoy intellectual (or mental) wellness constantly challenge their minds.
         b. People who enjoy intellectual wellness never stop learning; they continue trying to learn new things throughout their lifetime.
      4. Interpersonal Wellness
         a. Your interpersonal (or social) wellness is defined by your ability to develop and maintain satisfying and supportive relationships.
         b. Social wellness requires participating in and contributing to your community, country, and world.
      5. Spiritual Wellness
         a. To enjoy spiritual wellness is to possess a set of guiding beliefs, principles, or values that give meaning and purpose to your life, especially in difficult times.
         b. Many people find meaning and purpose in their lives on their own – through nature, art, meditation, or good works – or by spending time with their loved ones.
      6. Environmental Wellness
         a. Your environmental wellness is defined by the livability of your surroundings.
         b. To improve your environmental wellness, you can learn about and protect yourself against hazards in your surroundings and work to make your world a cleaner and safer place.
      7. Other Aspects of Wellness
         a. Occupational wellness refers to the level of happiness you gain at your place of employment. This includes such items as job satisfaction, acceptance, and recognition of being a valued person in society.
b. Financial wellness is the ability to live within your means and manage your personal money without creating undue hardship or financial debt. Saving for the future or protecting yourself against possible future expenditures plays an important role with your health. Learning how to create and utilize a budget allows you to take control of your life in a positive sense.

E. New Opportunities and Responsibilities

1. A century ago, many people died from common infectious diseases and poor environmental conditions.
2. Due to medical advances and improved environmental conditions, life expectancy has been increased over the past 100 years.
3. However, chronic diseases have emerged as the major threat to health, and the three leading causes of death in the United States today are heart disease, cancer, and stroke.
4. The best treatment for chronic diseases is prevention through positive lifestyle choices.

F. The Healthy People Initiative

1. Health is not only a personal issue but a national concern as well.
2. The National Healthy People Initiative aims to prevent disease and improve Americans’ quality of life.
3. Healthy People 2020 proposes four broad national objectives:
   a. Eliminate preventable disease, disability, injury, and premature death.
   b. Achieve health equity, eliminate disparities, and improve the health of all groups
   c. Create social and physical environments that promote good health for all.
   d. Promote healthy development and healthy behaviors across every stage of life.

G. Behaviors That Contribute to Wellness

Practicing these behaviors can maximize one’s quality of life.

1. Be Physically Active
   Physical fitness activities have short-term and long-term benefits for both physical and mental health. The latest report from the Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee 2008 cites scientific evidence based on physical activity and improving longevity. A target of 150 minutes or greater per week is recommended for everyone.
2. Choose a Healthy Diet
   A healthy diet promotes wellness in both the short and long term. Many Americans currently have diets high in calories with low nutritional value. This is also linked to a number of chronic diseases.
3. Maintain a Healthy Body Weight
   Overweight and obesity are associated with higher mortality and morbidity. Maintaining this requires a commitment to wellness.
4. Manage Stress Effectively
   One can learn healthy ways of managing stress rather than eating, drinking, or smoking too much. These choices could have short- and long-term consequences regarding your overall health. Learning effective ways to handle or avoid stress is important to a healthy lifestyle.
5. Avoid Tobacco and Drug Use, and Limit Alcohol Consumption
   a. Tobacco use is associated with eight of the top ten causes of death in the United States; it kills about 440,000 Americans each year.
b. Excessive alcohol consumption is linked to six of the top ten causes of death, especially through its association with unintentional injuries. These injuries are the top 3 leading causes of death for Americans.

6. Protect Yourself from Disease and Injury
   a. Prevention is the key for avoiding this concern. This includes protecting yourself from infectious diseases, particularly those that are sexually transmitted.
   b. Adopt safe and responsible strategies to avoid infectious and sexually transmitted diseases.

7. Take Other Steps Toward Wellness
   a. Develop meaningful relationships
   b. Plan for successful aging
   c. Learn about the health care system
   d. Act responsibly toward the environment

H. The Role of Other Factors in Wellness
   1. Heredity, the environment, and adequate health care also influence health.
   2. These factors all interact; for example a sedentary lifestyle combined with a genetic predisposition for diabetes can greatly increase a person’s risk for developing the disease.
   3. Most important to remember is that behavior—the factor people can control—can greatly reduce risk.

II. Reaching Wellness through Lifestyle Management
   Use the techniques in this section to promote lifestyle management. This kind of approach is known as behavior change

   A. Getting Serious About Your Health
      Before you can change, you must know that the behavior is a problem and that you can change it.
      1. Examining Your Current Health Habits
         An observation from a friend, a family member, or a landmark event, such as the death of someone close to you, can get you thinking about behavior change. A self-assessment can start your journey towards improving your current lifestyle.
      2. Choosing a Target Behavior
         Start small by working on just one behavior at a time.
      3. Learn About Your Target Behavior
         What short-term and long-term effects does your target behavior have? Learn to identify the risks and benefits over the short and long term.
      4. Find Help
         Some challenging target behaviors may require outside help.

   B. Building Motivation to Change
      Knowledge that a behavior is damaging often is not enough to motivate change.
      1. Examining the Pros and Cons of Change
         Carefully analyze the short-term and long-term benefits and costs of continuing the target behavior and changing to a healthier behavior.
      2. Boosting Self-Efficacy
         Self-efficacy describes your belief in your ability to take action and perform a specific task.
a. **Locus of Control**
   This refers to the source (internal or external) that you believe controls your life.

b. **Visualization and Self-Talk**
   Seeing yourself practicing the healthy new behavior boosts your self-efficacy and promotes confidence to continue with the behavior, even with distractions.

c. **Role Models and Other Supportive Individuals**
   Use social outlets to help inspire you and find assistance from those who have learned the target behavior you want to practice.

3. **Identify and Overcome Barriers to Change**
   Develop a list of the key obstacles to help with your behavior change which can boost your chances for greater success.

C. **Enhancing Your Readiness to Change**
   *Prochaska’s Transtheoretical Model can enhance readiness and intention to change.*

1. **Precontemplation:** No intention of changing behavior.
2. **Contemplation:** Intending to take action within 6 months after identifying the problem.
3. **Preparation:** Planning to take action within a month, possibly with some small behavior change already completed.
4. **Action:** Outwardly changing behavior and environment. This requires the most commitment and is considered the riskiest stage of behavior regression.
5. **Maintenance:** Successful behavior change maintained for 6 months or more.
6. **Termination:** At this stage, some people have exited the cycle of change and are no longer tempted to lapse back into their old behavior.

D. **Dealing with Relapse**

1. Research suggests that most people make several attempts before they successfully change a behavior; four out of five people experience some degree of backsliding.
2. Follow these steps:
   a. forgive yourself
   b. give yourself credit for the progress you have already made
   c. move on

E. **Developing Skills for Change: Creating a Personalized Plan**
   *A well-developed plan sets goals, anticipates problems, and includes rewards.*

1. **Monitor Your Behavior and Gather Data**
   Keep careful records of the behavior you want to change.
2. **Analyze the Data and Identify Patterns**
   What events or times trigger the unhealthy behavior?
3. **Be “SMART” about Setting Goals**
   Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time frame-specific
4. **Devise a Plan of Action**
   Develop techniques that will support your daily efforts at behavior change.
   a. **Get What You Need.**
      Identify resources that can help you practice the new behavior.
   b. **Modify Your Environment**
      Avoid the cues that trigger the unhealthy behavior, and create cues that trigger the new behavior.
c. Control Related Habits
   Modify habits that contribute to your target behavior.

d. Reward Yourself
   Plan rewards for reaching subgoals in your plan.

e. Involve the People Around You
   Tell family and friends about your plan, and ask for their support.

f. Plan for Challenges
   Identify the people or situations that could derail your plan, and develop coping mechanisms.

5. Make a Personal Contract
   A serious personal contract can motivate you to follow through on your plan. Include a starting date, steps to measure progress, strategies to promote change, and a date to complete the goal.

F. Putting Your Plan into Action
   1. Resolve to stick with your plan regardless of the temptations you encounter.
   2. This step requires commitment despite any temptations that occur.
   3. Helpful strategies include substituting behaviors, building social support, using your health journal, using rewards, and revising your plan if necessary.

G. Staying with It
   1. You will run up against obstacles, and you may need to make changes.
   2. Sources that may block your progress include:
      a. Social Influences
         Is your support group supporting you or joining you?
      b. Levels of Motivation and Commitment
         Are you truly committed, and have you found an inner drive within yourself that will be effective?
      c. Choice of Techniques and Level of Effort
         Is your plan working as well as you thought it would? Are you willing to make changes to techniques that aren’t effective or be able to push yourself a little bit harder?
      d. Stress Barrier
         If you do “hit the wall,” consider the amount of stressors in your life, and eliminate them as part of the solutions.
      e. Procrastinating, Rationalizing, and Blaming
         Be cognizant of game-playing with yourself, and stop it before it becomes a major distraction to your success.

H. Being Fit and Well for Life
   1. Take on your easier problems first, and then build on your success over time.
   2. There is empowerment in taking charge of your health— you can’t control everything in your life, but you can create a lifestyle that minimizes risks and maximizes well-being and enjoyment.
   3. Consider your wellness a lifelong goal, and continue to be informed and assess and improve your health behaviors.
   4. Understand that wellness is a lifetime commitment, and that you can make a difference by taking charge of your health.
Sample behavior change plans (including step-by-step instructions, sample logs for tracking behavior, and behavior change contracts):

- Incorporating More Fruits and Vegetables into Your Diet
- Reducing the Saturated and Trans Fats in Your Diet
- Choosing Healthier Beverages
- Reducing Your Caffeine Intake
- Developing Responsible Drinking Habits

**Daily Fitness and Nutrition Journal**

The Journal includes behavior change tools for students whose target behaviors relate to physical activity or eating habits. Students can begin by reviewing the planning and monitoring tools available in the log—by starting to track their target behavior. The Journal can be used throughout the course to provide a record and portfolio of student efforts at behavior change. If students have target behaviors relating to other health habits, the fitness and nutrition examples in the journal can provide a good model for the type of program plan and log they should create for their behavior change program. (The Online Learning Center includes blank sample logs for other target behaviors.)

**INTERNET RESOURCES**

**Organizations, Hotlines, and Websites**

The Internet addresses (also called uniform resource locators, or URLs) listed here were accurate at the time of publication.

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.* Through phone, fax, and the Internet, the CDC provides a wide variety of health information.
800-311-3435; 888-CDC-FAXX (CDC FAX)
http://www.cdc.gov

Many other government websites provide access to health related materials:


*National Institutes of Health:* http://www.nih.gov

*Go Ask Alice.* Sponsored by the Columbia University Health Service, this site provides answers to student questions about stress, sexuality, fitness, and many other wellness topics.
http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu

*Healthfinder.* A gateway to online publications, websites, support and self-help groups, and agencies and organizations that produce reliable health information.
http://www.healthfinder.gov

*Healthy People 2010.* Provides information on Healthy People objectives and priority areas.
202-205-8583
http://www.healthypeople.gov

*MedlinePlus: Evaluating Health Information.* Provides background information and links to sites with guidelines for finding and evaluating health information on the Web.
National Health Information Center (NHIC). Puts consumers in touch with the organizations that are best able to provide answers to health-related questions.
800-336-4797
http://www.health.gov/nhic

National Women’s Health Information Center. Provides information and answers to frequently asked questions.
800-994-WOMAN
http://www.4woman.org

NOAH: New York Online Access to Health. Provides consumer health information in both English and Spanish.
http://www.noah-health.org

Nutrition.Gov. Gateway to online nutrition information from U.S. government.
http://www.nutrition.gov

Student Counseling Virtual Pamphlet Collection. Provides links more than 400 pamphlets produced by different student counseling centers; topics include relationships, family issues, substance abuse, anger management, and study skills.
http://www.dr-bob.org/vpc

World Health Organization (WHO). Provides information about WHO activities and about many health topics and issues affecting people around the world.
http://www.who.int

The following are just a few of the many sites that provide consumer-oriented information on a variety of health issues:


InteliHealth: http://www.intelihealth.com/IH/ihtIH/WSIHW000/408/408.html

Mayo Clinic: http://www.mayoclinic.com/

WebMD: http://webmd.com

The following sites provide daily health news updates:

CNN Health: http://www.cnn.com/health