

Glossary

Advocacy and support groups

Organizations and groups that actively support participants and their families with resources, including self-empowerment and survival tools.

Allopathic medicine

A system in which medical doctors and other healthcare professionals treat symptoms and diseases using drugs, radiation, surgery or other science-based modern medical methods. Also called conventional medicine and Western medicine.

Alternative medicine

Refers to non-mainstream practices used instead of conventional medicine.

Anxiety

Mental state characterized by persistent, excessive or extreme worries or apprehension about daily events, experiences, or objects. Note that anxiety is marked by excessive worries that don't go away even in the absence of a stressor. Anxiety may lead to muscle tension, irritability, difficulty concentrating, fatigue, and insomnia.

Assertive communication

A way of clearly stating one's feelings and opinions and firmly advocating for one's rights and needs without violating the rights of others.

Attitude

Positive or negative evaluations toward other people, objects, concepts, activities, behaviors, events, trends, or other observations and occurrences.

Basic health indicator

A characteristic of an individual, population or environment which is subjected to measurement and can be used to describe one or more aspects of the health of an individual or population (quality, quantity and time).

Behavior

Manner of acting or controlling oneself.

Behavioral health

Overall emotional and psychological condition including cognitive and emotional capabilities, ability to function in society, ability to self-regulate, and other skills needed to meet the ordinary demands of everyday life. Behavioral health includes both mental health promotion and substance use prevention.

Body image

Thoughts and feelings about a person's own body and how it looks to others.

Chronic disease

A disease that has one or more of the following characteristics: it is permanent, leaves residual disability, is caused by a nonreversible pathological alteration, requires special training of the patient for rehabilitation, or may be expected to require a long period of supervision, observation or care.

Community

A collection of people who interact with one another and whose common interest or characteristics gives them a sense of unity and belonging. The function of a community includes its members' sense of belonging and shared identity, values, norms, communication, and supporting behaviors. A community has three features: location, population, and social system.

Compassion

The human quality of understanding the suffering of others paired with the desire to help alleviate it. Compassion is marked by equal parts caring and discipline.

Coping

Dealing successfully with difficult changes in one's life.

Coping skills

The methods a person uses to deal with stressful situations. These may help a person face a situation, take action, and be flexible and persistent in solving problems.

Cultural competence

A set of skills that result in an individual understanding and appreciating cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups and individuals. This competence requires that the individual draw on the community-based values, traditions, and customs to work with knowledgeable persons of and from the community in developing targeted interventions and communications.

Culture

The collective values, beliefs, customs, and behaviors of a group.

Depression

An emotional state characterized by feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, irritability, and/or worthlessness and by a lack of interest in daily life.

Determinants of health

Health is maintained and improved not only through the advancement and application of health science, but also through the efforts and intelligent lifestyle choices of the individual and society. The main determinants of health include the social and economic environment, the physical environment and a person's individual characteristics and behaviors. Key determinants of health include: 1) Income and social status; 2) Social support networks; 3) Education and literacy; 4) Employment/working conditions; 5) Social environments; 6) Physical environments; 7) Personal health practices and coping skills; 8) Healthy child development; 9) Biology and genetics; 10) Health care services; 11) Gender; 12) Culture.

Dietary supplement

A dietary supplement is a manufactured product intended to supplement the diet taken orally as a pill, capsule, tablet, or liquid. A supplement can provide nutrients either extracted from food sources or synthetic, in order to increase the quantity of their consumption. The class of nutrient compounds includes vitamins, minerals, fiber, fatty acids and amino acids. Dietary supplements can also contain substances that have not been confirmed as being essential to life, but are marketed as having a beneficial biological effect, such as plant pigments or polyphenols.

Dimensions of health

The environmental, mental, intellectual, occupational, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of health that interact together to help determine one's overall state of wellness.

Disease

A state of dysfunction of organs or organ systems that can result in diminished quality of life. Disease is largely socially defined and may be attributed to a multitude of factors. Thus, drug dependence is currently seen by some as a disease, when it previously was considered to be a moral or legal problem.

Distress

Emotional, social, spiritual, or physical pain or suffering that may cause a person to feel sad, afraid, depressed, anxious, or lonely.

Eating disorder

A psychological illness characterized by a serious disturbance in eating behaviors.

Emotional health

A dimension of health that involves one's emotions, mood, outlook on life, and beliefs about oneself.

Emotional wellness

A dimension of wellness that involves awareness of a person's emotions as they occur, expressing and processing emotions in a productive and positive way, using the insight provided by one's emotions to guide actions, approaching life with optimism, creating interdependent relationships that involve trust and respect, and engaging in healthy coping mechanisms.

Emotions

Moods and feelings.

Empathy

The ability to imagine oneself in someone else's place, and to understand someone else's wants, needs, and point of view.

Environmental health

The interrelationships between people and their environment that promote human health and well-being and foster a safe and healthful environment. Environmental health includes all aspects of human health and quality of life that are determined by physical, chemical, biological, social, and psychosocial factors in the environment.

Environmental wellness

A dimension of wellness that involves living and working in environments that are safe and healthy and facilitate one's sense of well-being.

Essential nutrients

An essential nutrient is a nutrient required for normal physiological function that cannot be synthesized in the body, either at all or in sufficient quantities and therefore must be obtained from a dietary source. In the case of humans, there are nine amino acids, two fatty acids, thirteen vitamins and fifteen minerals that are considered essential nutrients. In addition, there are several molecules that are considered conditionally essential nutrients since they are indispensable in certain developmental and pathological states.

Eustress

A form of stress that has a positive, beneficial effect on health, motivation, performance, and emotional well-being.

Ethnobotany

Ethnobotany is the study of a region's plants and their practical uses through the traditional knowledge of a local culture and people. An ethnobotanist thus strives to document the local customs involving the practical uses of local flora for many aspects of life, such as plants as medicines, foods, and clothing.

Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM)

An approach to medical practice intended to optimize decision-making by emphasizing the use of evidence from well-designed and well-conducted research. Although all medicine based on science has some degree of empirical support, EBM goes further, classifying evidence by its epistemologic strength and requiring that only the strongest types (coming from meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and randomized controlled trials) can yield strong recommendations; weaker types (such as from case-control studies) can yield only weak recommendations.

Foodomics

A discipline that studies food and nutrition using advanced "-omics" technologies and bioinformatics to improve health and well-being.

Goal-setting

A process of defining goals and planning steps to achieve them. Approaches include setting long-term, short-term, and SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely) goals.

Healing

Healing is restoration of wholeness and unity of body, mind and spirit. It involves curing when possible, but embraces more than cure. When illness is limited to disease and health care is limited to cure, the deeper dimensions of healing are missed.

Health

The condition of being sound in body, mind, or spirit. The state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Health has many dimensions, including anatomical, physiological and mental, and is largely culturally defined. Health can be taught, strengthened and learned. Health is a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living.

Health care

Health care, health-care, or healthcare means any care, treatment, service, or procedure to prevent disease, injury and other physical and mental impairment; and to maintain, diagnose, or otherwise affect an individual's physical or mental condition.

Health care continuum

The health care continuum is the full array of physical and behavioral health services, from prevention to treatment to rehabilitation and maintenance, required to support optimum health of a population.

Health care delivery system

Used to describe the way in which health care is furnished to people. Classification of health care delivery is typically by the acuity of the person's illnesses and level of specialization of the care providers: 1) Primary care level; 2) Secondary care level; 3) Tertiary care level. Another way to classify health care delivery is: 1) Preventive; 2) Curative; 3) Rehabilitative.

Health care ecosystem

Includes the patient, healthcare providers, caregivers, families, data, analytics, and processes to support the delivery of care and optimize health outcomes.

Health inequities

Differences in health status, access to care, or in the distribution of health resources between different population groups, arising from the social conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. Health inequities, on the other hand, are differences in health that are not only unnecessary and avoidable but, in addition, are considered unfair and unjust.

Health ministry

Health ministry is a convergence of health promotion and religious beliefs. Health Ministers integrate faith with the promotion of health, wellness, and wholeness in their local communities. Health Ministers can be health navigators, wellness coaches, outreach workers, health educators, health ambassadors, promotores de salud, and health promoters. For example, Health Ministers can promote individual-level and community-level changes toward good health. Health Ministers are often part of a health and wellness ministry/team or care and concern ministry in a faith community. They incorporate the values, beliefs, and practices of a faith community as components in motivating persons toward health and wholeness.

Health model

There are a variety of models of the concept of health, including: 1) Clinical Model; 2) Host-Agent-Environment Model; 3) Health Belief Model (HBM).

Health outcomes

The results of measures or specific health care interventions in terms of a patient's health. Examples of positive health outcomes include: functioning well mentally, physically, and socially.

Health promotion

The process of enabling people to increase control over and to improve their health through empowerment processes and support.

Health status indicators

Measurements of the state of health of a specific individual, group or population.

Healthy relationship

A relationship characterized by mutual respect, consent, fairness, honesty, trust, and nonviolence.

Holistic

Holistic means considering the mind, body and spirit.

Human performance

A system that comprises a network of elements that work together to produce specific task objectives or repeatable outcomes. The system encompasses organizational factors, job-site conditions, individual behavior, and results.

Integrative medicine

Health care that uses all appropriate therapeutic approaches, conventional and non-mainstream, within a framework that focuses on health, the therapeutic relationship, and the whole person.

Intellectual wellness

A dimension of wellness that involves engaging in mentally stimulating activities, creativity, and expanding your personal and professional knowledge and skills. Intellectual wellness also encompasses involvement in the exploration of new ideas and information.

Interpersonal conflict

Conflicts between people or groups of people.

Life sciences

Branches of science that study living organisms. Examples include: biology, biochemistry, bioinformatics, botany, cell biology, genetics, immunology, microbiology, molecular biology, neuroscience, pharmacology, physiology, and systems biology, among many others.

Medical home

An approach to providing comprehensive primary care that enables partnering among patients, the medical team, and families, with the goal of yielding higher quality care and improved cost efficiency.

Medical model

The medical model, or conventional medical model, embodies basic assumptions about medicine that drive research and theorizing about physical or psychological difficulties on a basis of causation and remediation. The medical model approach includes complaint, history, physical examination, ancillary tests if needed, diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis with and without treatment. It can be contrasted with other models such as the holistic model of the alternative health movement and the social model of the disability rights movement, as well as to biopsychosocial and recovery models of mental disorders.

Medicine

Medicine is the science and practice of establishing the diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, and prevention of disease. Medicine encompasses a variety of health care practices evolved to maintain and restore health by the prevention and treatment of illness. Contemporary medicine applies biomedical sciences, biomedical research, genetics, and medical technology to diagnose, treat, and prevent injury and disease.

Mental disorder

A medical condition characterized by mental or emotional problems severe or persistent enough to interfere with daily functioning.

Mental health

A state of well-being in which one is able to realize one's own abilities, make choices, relate to others, cope with the normal stresses of life, self-regulate during stressful times, work productively, and make a contribution to the community. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being and affects how we think, feel, and act.

Micronutrient

Micronutrients are essential elements required by organisms in small quantities throughout life to orchestrate a range of physiological functions to maintain health. For human nutrition, micronutrient requirements are in amounts generally less than 100 milligrams per day, whereas macronutrients are required in gram quantities daily.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the quality of being present and fully engaged with whatever we're doing at the moment, free from distraction or judgment, and aware of our thoughts and feelings without getting caught up in them.

Morbidity

A measure of disease incidence or prevalence in a given population, location or other grouping of interest.

Mortality

A measure of deaths in a given population, location or other grouping of interest.

Nutrient

Nutrients are chemical compounds in food that are used by the body to function properly and maintain health. Examples include proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals.

Nutriproteomics

The study of interactions between dietary nutrients with the human genome, including molecular and cellular changes in protein expression in the body.

Nutrition

The taking in and use of food and other nourishing material by the body.

Nutritional genomics

The study of the relationship between the human genome, nutrition and health, with the goal of understanding how the whole body responds to a food, including how an individual's genome affects the metabolism and response to nutrients and bioactive components in a food.

Occupational wellness

A dimension of wellness that involves finding personal satisfaction and fulfillment through work. It entails using one's talents and skills to their fullest extent through one's career as well as understanding the need for and creating a balance between work and personal time.

Patient-centered medicine

By listening to, informing and involving patients in their own care, patient-centered medicine is responsive to patient needs and values.

Physical wellness

A dimension of wellness that includes being aware of and taking care of one's body, including engaging in pleasurable physical activity and eating food that is nutritious. Physical wellness also involves obtaining regular medical check-ups, sleeping well, and living tobacco-free.

Prevalence

The number of cases of a disease, infected people or people with some other attribute present during a particular interval of time. It is often expressed as a rate.

Prevention

Actions taken to reduce susceptibility or exposure to health problems (primary prevention), detect and treat disease in early stages (secondary prevention), or alleviate the effects of disease and injury (tertiary prevention).

Quality of life

The degree to which individuals perceive themselves as able to function physically, emotionally and socially.

Risk factor

Personal qualities or societal conditions that lead to the increased probability of a problem or problems developing.

Self-esteem

Feelings of self-worth, self-confidence, and self-respect.

Self-harm

Deliberately injuring one's own body.

Self-talk

The act or practice of talking to oneself, either aloud or silently. Self-talk may be positive or negative.

SMART Goal-setting

A specific type of goal-setting. SMART goals are: 1) Specific; 2) Measurable; Attainable/Achievable; 4) Realistic/Relevant; 5) Timely/Time bound/Timeline.

Social capital

Refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions.

Social norm

Expectations about behavior, thoughts or feelings that are appropriate and sanctioned within a particular society. Social norms can play an important role in the health status of individuals.

Social wellness

A dimension of wellness that involves creating meaningful interpersonal relationships that feel supportive and satisfying. Social wellness also involves contributing positively to one's community.

Society

The community of people living in a particular country or region and having shared customs, laws, and organizations.

Spiritual wellness

A dimension of wellness that involves having a belief system that is meaningful and matches a person's values, establishing a life that feels purposeful, and being compassionate towards others. Spiritual wellness does not necessarily mean having a religion; rather, it focuses on a person's ability to attribute meaning to life and the day-to-day interactions that one experiences.

Stress

The physical and psychological responses of a person to traumatic or challenging situations. Note that stress is typically caused by short-term external triggers, such as a work deadline or an interpersonal conflict. However, a trigger may also be long-term, such as discrimination or chronic illness.

Stress management

The use of healthy ways to reduce and manage stress.

Values

Principles or standards of behavior one considers important.

Vulnerable populations

A group of people with certain characteristics that cause them to be at greater risk of having poor health outcomes. These characteristics include, but are not limited to, age, culture, disability, education, ethnicity, health insurance, housing status, income, mental health, and race.

Well-being

A state of balance or alignment in body, mind, and spirit. In this state, we feel content; connected to purpose, people, and community; peaceful and energized; resilient and safe.

Wellness

An overall state of being in good health. Wellness aims to optimize well-being and is a state beyond absence of illness. The concept of wellness allows for individual variability. Each person could define wellness in relation to personal expectations. The U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) defines wellness as having eight aspects: emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, and spiritual.

Wellness behaviors

Promote healthy functioning and help prevent illness. Examples include: stress management, nutritional awareness, and physical fitness.