



Social Wellness

Volume 3, Issue 2

WellU @HT Weekly Wellness Newsletter

Message from the Editor

Greetings students, faculty, and staff.

Welcome back to another edition of our wellness newsletter. I am delighted to continue our exploration in the various dimensions of wellness. This week we are delving into the realm of social wellness. This dimension of wellness helps us build bonds and relationships that will strengthen our lives.

Social wellness consists of how good we communicate, how we are dealing with emotions, how we respect others and how we solve problems. This determines how great we bond with those around us, and how we make connections. It is important to have a good social network and feel supported by those around us. Being alone is okay, but as human beings we can not live completely in isolation we need each other to express thoughts and feelings.

I am pleased to invite you initiate this journey and discover more about the importance of being social and building healthy genuine relationships.

"Surround yourself with only people who are going to lift you higher" – Oprah Winfrey

Naidelin Sanchez
Student Wellness Ambassador

What Is Social Wellness?

Social wellness is building a healthy, nurturing, and supportive relationships as well as fostering a genuine connection with those around you. Social wellness also includes balancing the unique needs of romantic relationships with other parts of your life.

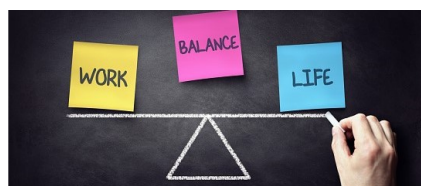
Having a good level of social wellness allows you to build good and healthy relationships with others. Having a supportive social network allows you to develop assertive skills and become comfortable with who you are in social situations. This will also allow you to increase a self-stem.

Social Wellness: Overall Health



Signs of Good Social Wellness

- Engaging with people in the community.
- Being able to maintain and develop positive relationships, friendships and/or social networks.
- The ability to create boundaries within relationship boundaries that encourage communication, trust and conflict management.
- Having supportive network of family and friends.
- Valuing diversity and treat others with respect.
- Balancing social and personal time.
- Remembering to have fun.



Goal For Your Social Wellness

- Develop the ability to create and maintain close friendships.
- Feel comfortable interacting with diverse individuals and groups.
- Become aware of your responsibilities for the welfare of different communities.
- Understand and accept those with a different sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, life experience, etc.
- Understand the concepts of sex and gender role stereotyping and explore appropriate sex and gender role behavior for yourself.
- Develop a "global consciousness" by recognizing the interrelatedness of cultural, global and national issues and needs.
- Work toward becoming a responsible world citizen.

How to Strengthen Your Social Wellness?

Social wellness is the dimension of wellness that comes from connection and community—thus, we must take an active role in strengthening it! Here are some recommendations for strengthening our social wellness:

- **Take care of yourself.** Take care of yourself first! This includes: manage stress, exercise, sleep well and eat well. If you feel good, then you will care for others as well. You always come first.
- **Get active together.** After developing relationships, you can make the most of them by getting together and engaging on those relationships. For example, create exercise groups to support one another, or a walking group or finding something in common to be an excuse to engage together.
- **Build healthy relationships.** Build genuine relationships with friends, family, and significant others, these relationships are important throughout your life. Furthermore, recent research has shown that talking to with friends or loved ones for 10 minutes can enhance our social health (Kahlon et al., 2021). So connect with at least five friends a week to boost your social wellbeing.
- **Family.** Having a supportive network of family and friends improves social wellness surround yourself with people who you can trust, and you know they care about
- **Engage in hobbies and extracurricular activities.** Get to know who you are, where you want to be and where your boundaries lie support you to engage in positive relationships with people with similar interest. It is also recommended to get involved locally to connect with your community—volunteer, participate and connect.
- **Set boundaries.** Set healthy boundaries. If you have draining or toxic relationships, consider stepping back from them. Limit your interaction with negative people. Establish your boundaries. It is okay to say 'no', sometimes. Saying 'no' is important for setting boundaries, reducing stress, and prioritizing (Banerjee, 2023). Strategies include honesty, offering alternatives, and self-compassion. Certainly, do so politely and respectfully.

Remember that the socially well person has a network of support based on interdependence, mutual trust, respect and has developed a sensitivity and awareness towards the feelings of

others. Social wellness is the ability to develop close and sustaining relationships and engage in successful interaction with others (Killam, 2021).



How to Build Healthy Relationships

- Recognize how other people influence you.
- Share your feelings honestly.
- Ask for what you need from others.
- Listen to others without judgement or blame. Be caring and empathetic.
- Disagree with others respectfully. Conflicts should not turn into personal attacks.
- Avoid being overly critical, angry outbursts, and violent behavior.
- Expect others to treat you with respect and honesty in return.
- Compromise. Try to come to agreements that work for everyone.
- Protect yourself from violent and abusive people. Set boundaries with others. Decide what you are and aren't willing to do. It's okay to say no.
- Learn the differences between healthy, unhealthy, and abusive ways of relating to others.

Social Wellness: Increase Your Social Connections





Social Support & Wellness | Chandra Story | TEDxOStateU



Conflict Resolution

Atul Gawande, surgeon, writer and assistant administrator for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), once said: “human beings are social creatures. We are social not just in the trivial sense that we like company, and not just in the obvious sense that we each depend on others. We are social in a more elemental way: simply to exist as a normal human being requires interaction with other people.” Thus, building connections, building relationships with others is part of the human experience. Yet, conflicts inevitably arise within them. Relationships are two-way streets, so how we navigate these conflicts can impact the quality and longevity of our relationships with others.

In this commentary, we provide recommendations for effective conflict resolution in relationships. It is not an exhaustive list, but a good starting point to consider so we navigate positively. Here are the recommendations:

- **Active listening**—A cornerstone of successful conflict resolution. Studies show that actively listening to others' perspective fosters empathy and understanding, reducing negative emotions and facilitating compromise (Weger et al., 2014). Moreover, encouraging individuals

to express their emotions constructively rather than defensively promotes open communication and mutual respect, essential for resolving conflicts amicably (Overton & Lowry, 2013).

- **Empathy**—Just as active listening to others during a conflict is very important, so is having empathy towards the other person's position and emotions in a given situation. Empathy enhances understanding and can de-escalate conflicts.
- **Clarify interests**—Identifying and addressing underlying interests rather than focusing solely on surface-level positions proves essential in resolving conflicts effectively. By understanding each other's needs and motivations, individuals can collaboratively seek solutions that satisfy both parties, leading to more sustainable resolutions (Folorunsho, 2016).
- **Communication**—Emphasize clear and respectful communication. Use "I" statements to express feelings and avoid blame or accusations. Moreover, effective communication is a precursor of empathy, creating connections and paving the way for overcoming differences (Weaver, 2023; Overall & McNulty, 2017).
- **Manage emotions**—Sometimes this may appear to fall under the "easier said than done." Yet, managing our emotions during conflict such as deep breathing, mindfulness, or taking breaks; simply, engaging in emotional regulation is crucial for effective conflict resolution (Posthuma, 2012).
- **Cultural sensitivity**—Cultural sensitivity also emerges as a crucial aspect of conflict resolution in diverse relationships—we do not all see things the same way and our culture plays a big part in it. Recognizing and respecting cultural differences in communication styles and conflict resolution approaches fosters mutual understanding and prevents misunderstandings (Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006; Gunkel, Schlaegel & Taras, 2016; Kunne, 2023).

In short, conflict is part of any relationship so how we resolve conflicts can either strengthen our relationships with others or deteriorate them. Thus, how we handle conflict matters. By engaging in active listening, putting ourselves on the other person's shoes (being empathetic), constructively expressing our emotions, finding underlying interests, being culturally sensitive and emotionally regulating ourselves, we can navigate conflicts more successfully, fostering healthier and more fulfilling relationships.

Communication

It is important to have good communication skills because communicating clarifies information, reducing wasted time, helps build trust, relationships. Good communication lets you to make better choices and build interpersonal relationships anywhere. You will be more likely to understand others and be understood which fosters stronger connections.

Here is how to improve your Social Wellness through good communication skills. You might find yourself uncomfortable with some suggestions depending on if you are more introverted or extraverted. How we communicate is important practice the following with people you are comfortable with and work your way to a greater challenge and improve your communication skills.

Be a good listener

- Don't interrupt the person talking.
- Give them enough time to make their comments.
- Repeat back to them what you think you heard/understood if you are not sure.

Practice good body language

- Maintain good eye contact with the person or people you are around.
- Keep your arms open (not hugging yourself) while engaging with others.
- Refrain from yawning or sighing as it appears you are not interested.
- Avoid rolling your eyes.
- Avoid looking at your watch, phone, or other distractions.
- Keep a relaxed facial expression.
- Keep your body facing the person talking.
- Keep your head up.
- Use open hand gestures.

Build healthy meaningful relationships

- Show respect to others, even if they don't deserve it – you are the one practicing good social skills. Other people may not always have them.
- Show respect to yourself, when other is disrespectful, either remove yourself from their presence or talk with them about how you would like to be treated.
- When you love and respect yourself your mood becomes more positive.

Seek support

- It is important to have someone to lean on when you need emotional support.
- Reach out to someone you can trust.
- Trustworthy people are usually the ones who build your self-confidence and support you and your goals to reach your highest potential.
- If you have need you can seek out a school counselor to assist you.

The Social Wellness Toolkit

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has created an user friendly resource to help people strengthen their social wellness. You can access the 'Social Wellness Toolkit' by clicking the image below:

YOUR HEALTHIEST SELF

Social Wellness Checklist

Positive social habits can help you build support systems and stay healthier mentally and physically. Here are some tips for connecting with others:

And How is Your Social Wellness?

Check in with your social wellness. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Are you able to communicate clearly when dealing with conflict?
- Do you have at least one good friend you can count on?
- Are you okay being alone?
- How are you at asking for help?
- Do you surround yourself with people who you can trust and know care for you?
- What aspects of your life do you enjoy?
- Do you try to keep in touch with supportive friends and family?

Social wellness requires us to take an active role in developing it. Thus, these questions are a good starting point. However, Huston-Tillotson University affords you many opportunities to enhance your social wellness. For example, join an interest or activity-based group (like our WellU RAM wellness program, or a student organization or a book club), attend campus event events and gatherings and make time in your routine for social connection.

For students, get to know your classmates and professors. Communicate regularly with others and work on being open, vulnerable, nonjudgmental and kind. When you are spending time with loved ones, focus on being fully present in the moment.

How is Your Social Health?

<https://youtu.be/bfCZBXQYSIw?si=AceUMu7BLXAxmZSY>



Carlos Cervantes

Carlos is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

