



GRCC

Center for Counseling
and Well-Being

BE WELL TO THRIVE

Physical, Emotional and Social Dimensions of Wellness





This workbook is based on “The Eight Dimensions of Wellness,” a model first developed by Dr. Peggy Swarbrick in the early 1990s. The model has evolved over the years and is an effective framework for anyone working to build daily habits and routines that strengthen their well-being.

We will focus on the three dimensions that most commonly impact GRCC students: physical wellness, emotional wellness and social wellness. Each section includes activities designed to help you apply these principles and techniques in your own life.

1. Physical Wellness

- Health habits and routines
- Sleep routines
- Health habit worksheet

2. Emotional Wellness

- Model of emotions worksheet
- Stress management and relaxation techniques
- Gratitude tips

3. Social Wellness

- Social wellness questionnaire
- Leisure activities
- Social media habits

PHYSICAL WELLNESS



A healthy body. Good physical health habits. Nutrition, exercise and appropriate health care. These make up the physical dimension of wellness.

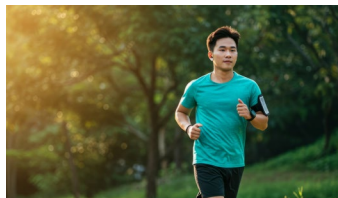
Health Habits and Routines

A key to physical wellness is developing healthy habits and routines that support our physical health. Being aware of both healthy and unhealthy habits and routines is important. Areas of physical health to consider when thinking about habits and routines include:



Nutrition

- Eat a balanced diet with plenty of fresh ingredients and appropriate portion sizes.
- Drink plenty of water.



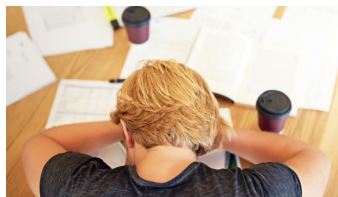
Physical Activity

- Move your body throughout the day, especially after sitting for extended periods of time.
- Dedicate at least 30 minutes a day to structured exercise, like walking or yoga.



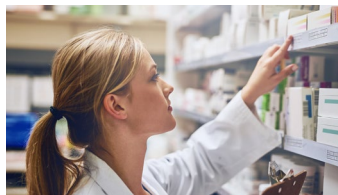
Sleep

- Try to get seven to eight hours of sleep every day.
- Establish a sleep routine using some of the practices described on the next page.



Alcohol, Tobacco, Caffeine and Other Drugs

- Maintain moderation and be aware of the influence alcohol and other drugs may have on your body and lifestyle.



Medication

- Take medications as prescribed and communicate with your doctor about the medication's effectiveness or any changes in your health.



Preventative Medicine

- Have a primary care physician, dentist and eye doctor.
- Engage in routine healthcare such as annual check-ups.

Sleep Routine

Sleep impacts physical health, mental health, mood, concentration and focus, cognitive and physical performance, immune system, academic performance and perceptions of quality of life and well-being.

Establishing routines and consistent practices around sleep can help ensure you get enough quality sleep every day.

Start your routine one hour before bed and choose activities or practices that help relax your body.

Try to go to sleep and wake up around the same time every day.

Use your bed only for sleeping, don't scroll social media or study in bed.

Create a comfortable, cool and dark environment for sleeping.

Turn off electronics one hour before bed.

Avoid stimulation before sleep.

Avoid alcohol, caffeine or nicotine four hours before bed.

Avoid heavy or spicy food before bedtime.

Avoid or minimize napping during the day.

Get exercise and exposure to light during the day.

Practice visualizing peaceful imagery, deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation.

If you are unable to sleep after 20 minutes, get up and do something relaxing or boring until you feel sleepy.

Health Habits Worksheet

1. Name habits and routines you are already doing that support positive physical health.

2. Identify unhealthy habits and routines that may be impacting your wellness.

3. Identify one habit or routine you hope to create.

4. Identify your motivation for creating this habit.

5. List specific steps you will take to incorporate this activity into your daily life.

6. Identify anyone you want to enlist for support in creating this habit or routine.

7. Identify a time frame for beginning this habit and reviewing progress.

EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

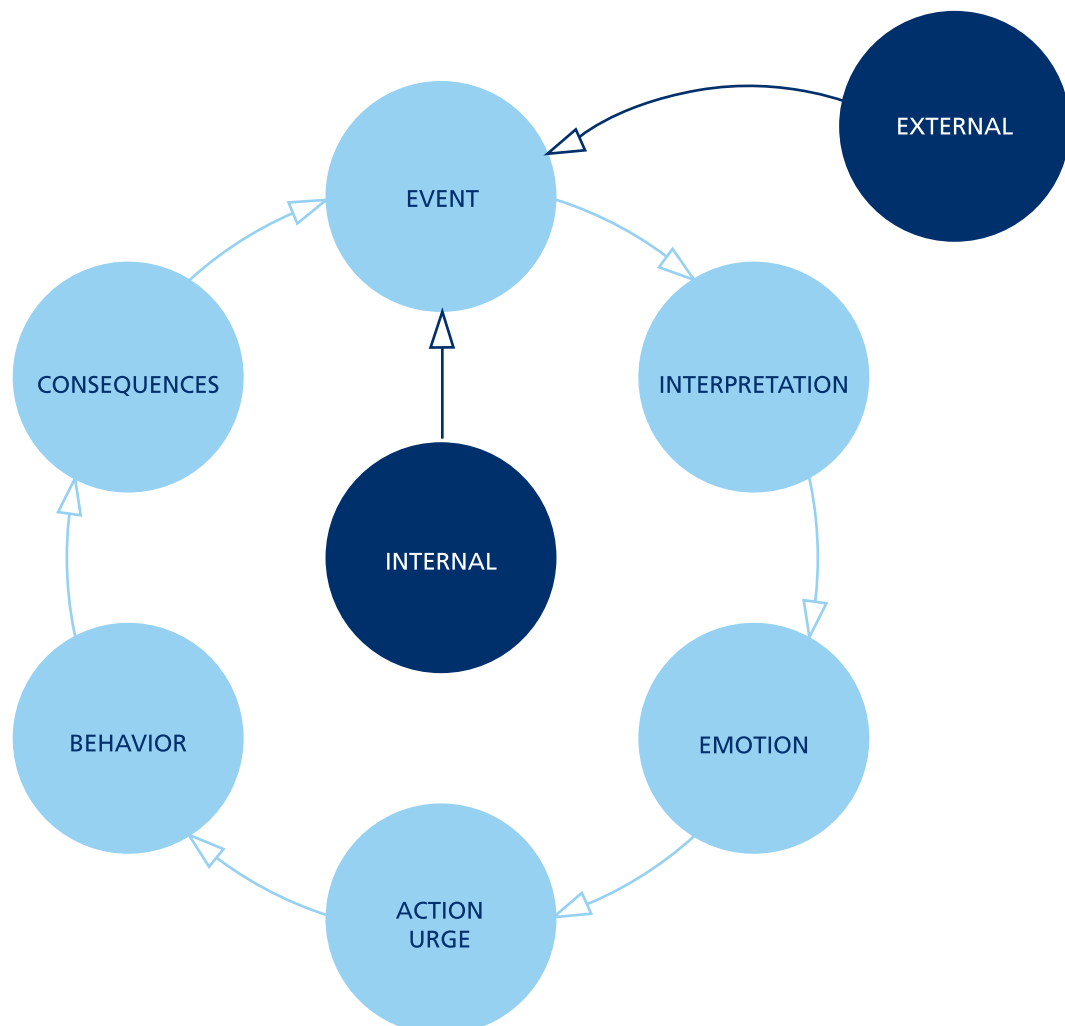


Emotional wellness involves the ability to express feelings, adjust to emotional challenges, cope with life's stressors and enjoy life. It includes knowing our strengths as well as what we want to get better at; living and working on our own, but letting others help us from time to time.

Model of Emotions

Emotions seem to happen out of the blue for many people and can lead to ineffective behaviors. Fortunately, you can learn to influence and even change many emotions and resulting actions by understanding how emotions happen in the first place. The model of emotions below will assist your efforts. Take a moment to read about each stage and use the questions to reflect on an experience that triggered an emotional response or behavior.

Remember, understanding how emotions happen helps us manage them.



Event

Events begin the cycle of emotion. They can be internal (within us) or external (in our environment).

Describe the event: what happened, who, what, when and where?

Interpretation

How we interpret events has a tremendous influence on what we feel. Step back, observe and describe the available facts to check your interpretation of the event. Ask yourself whether the interpretation works in the situation, and consider other ways of looking at the situation.

Describe your interpretation: what judgement, evaluations, self-talk, thoughts or beliefs were activated?

Emotion

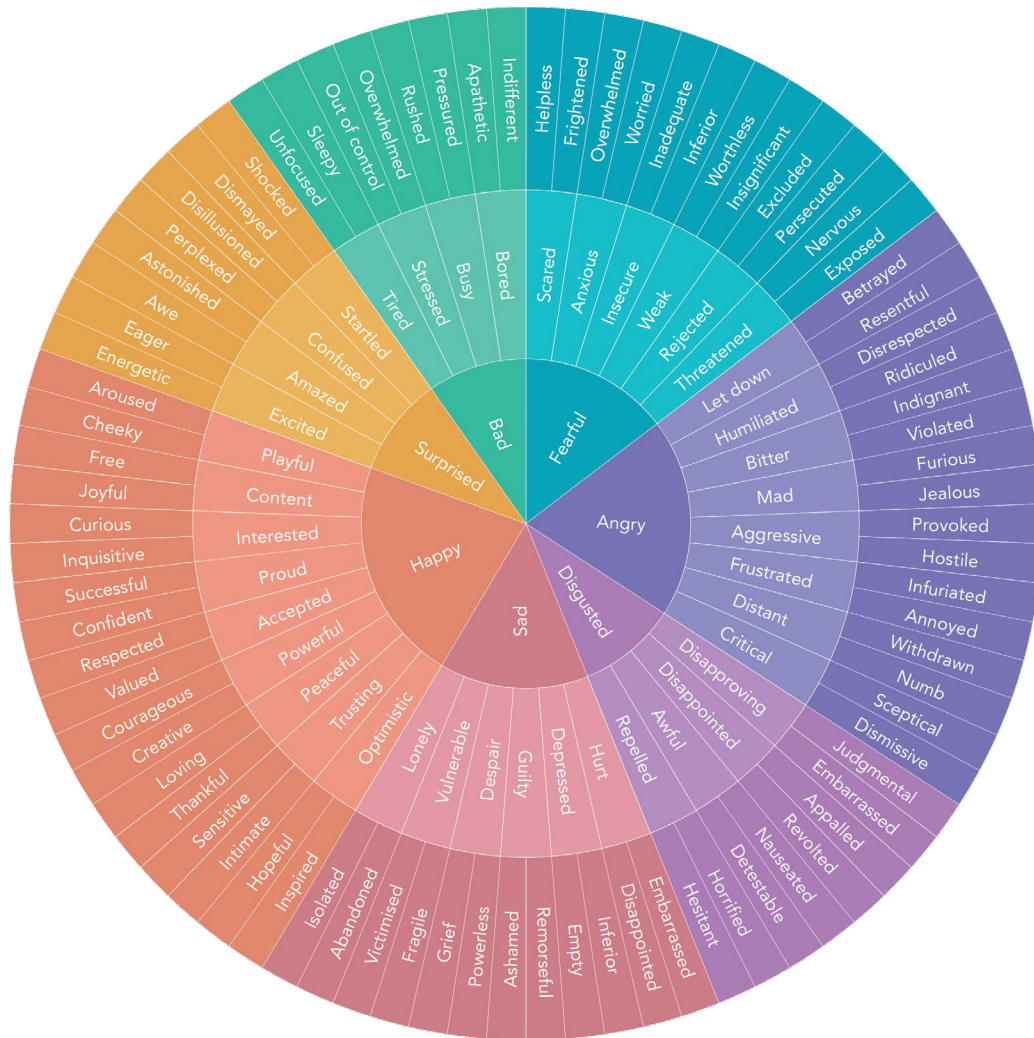
Notice your emotional experience.

1. What is happening in your body (e.g., muscle relaxation or tension, heart rate, breathing)?
2. What is happening externally with your body (e.g., facial expressions, posture)?
3. What are you communicating both verbally and nonverbally?
4. Use the available information to name your emotion.
5. There are layers of emotions. Naming both surface and underlying emotions is helpful.

6. Remember to observe and describe the emotion nonjudgmentally.



The Feelings Wheel



Originally created by Dr. Gloria Willcox

Describe your emotion: What is happening physically? What body language do you detect?
Put a name on the emotion; Identify underlying emotions too, if possible.

Action Urge and Behavior

What is the emotion urging or pulling you to do? Or, is a behavior already happening? From what state of mind are your action urges and behaviors flowing? Remember to validate your emotion(s) and choose behaviors from a centered place. Participate with effectiveness and respond rather than react. Delay your behavior if you anticipate that it will be ineffective.

Note that some action urges can be effective and it is important to act on those, but other actions should not be acted on because they will be ineffective.

Describe your action urge: What action, inaction or communication are you being emotionally pulled toward?

Describe your behavior and your decision to act in a particular way.

Consequences

Observe and describe what consequences result from or could result from your behavior. Evaluate what worked and what did not work, and learn from your experience.

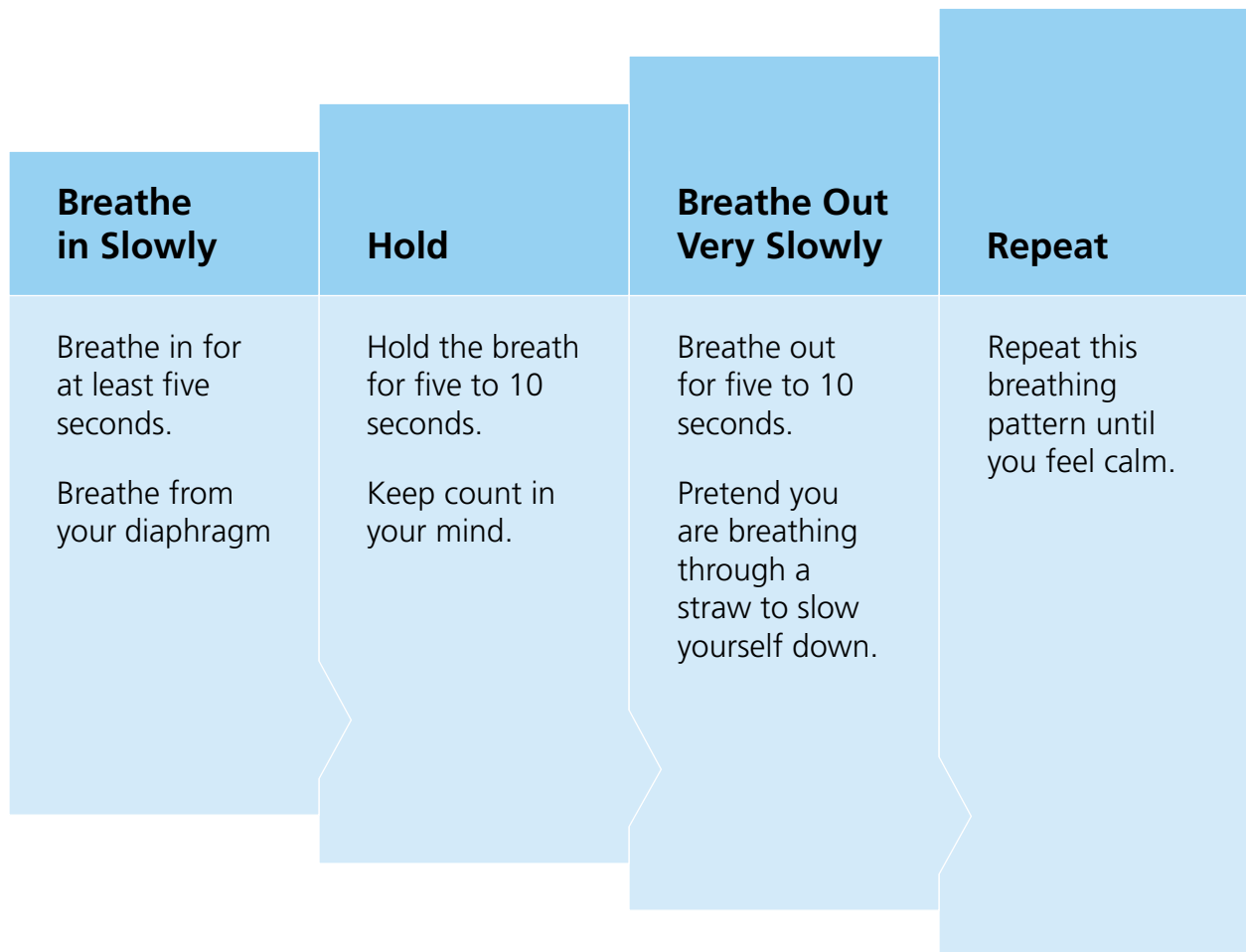
Describe the consequences or potential consequences. What can you learn from this to choose the best course of action or act differently in the future?

Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques

Another aspect of emotional health is having the tools to manage stress and other emotions that may impact your ability to function. Here are three relaxation techniques you can use to regulate your emotional response.

1. Deep Breathing

When in a fight-or-flight response, breathing becomes rapid and shallow. Deep breathing reverses that and sends messages to the brain to begin calming the body. Practice will make your body respond more efficiently to deep breathing in the future.



2. Imagery

Our brain has the ability to create emotional reactions based entirely on thoughts. The imagery technique uses this to its advantage.

1. Make sure you're somewhere quiet without too much noise or distraction. You'll need a few minutes to spend quietly in your mind.
2. Think of a place that is calming or peaceful for you. Some examples are the beach, hiking on a mountain, relaxing at home with a friend, being at a park or in a field, walking on a trail in the woods or playing with a pet.
3. Paint a picture of the calming place in your mind. Don't just think of the place briefly — imagine every detail. Go through each of your senses and imagine what you would experience in your relaxing place.

Here's an example using a beach.

				
Sight	Sound	Feel	Taste	Smell
<p>The sun is high in the sky.</p> <p>You are surrounded by white sand.</p> <p>The water is green-blue, and waves are calmly rolling in.</p>	<p>You can hear the splashing of the waves.</p> <p>Seagulls are calling to each other in the background.</p> <p>You can hear children laughing.</p>	<p>The sun is warm on your back, but the breeze cools you down.</p> <p>You can feel the sand between your toes.</p> <p>The water feels refreshing.</p>	<p>You are enjoying an ice cream cone.</p> <p>The ice cream is sweet and creamy.</p> <p>The waffle cone crunches as you bite it.</p>	<p>You smell the fresh air.</p> <p>You smell the smoke of a nearby campfire.</p> <p>There is a food truck, and you can smell the aroma of great food.</p>
				

3. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

During a fight-or-flight response, the tension in our muscles increases. This can lead to a feeling of stiffness or even back and neck pain. Progressive muscle relaxation teaches us to become more aware of this tension, allowing us to better identify and address stress.

- Find a private and quiet location. You should sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
- The idea of this technique is to tense each muscle and then release the tension intentionally.

Tense

Tense the muscles in your toes by curling them into your foot. Notice how it feels when your foot is tense.

Hold the tension for five to 10 seconds.

Release

Release the tension from your toes. Let them relax.

Notice how your toes feel differently after you release the tension.

Tense

Tense the muscles in your calf. Hold it for five to 10 seconds.

Notice how the sensation of tension in your leg feels.

Release

Release the tension in your calf. Relax your legs.

Notice how the feeling of relaxation differs from the tension.

Repeat

After you finish with your feet and legs, move up through your torso, arms, hands, neck and head.

Gratitude

Gratitude helps by shifting focus toward positive experiences rather than negative ones. Research has shown that gratitude can support emotional and physical health while deepening resilience.

Write about three positive experiences from your day. These experiences can be small ("The weather was perfect when I walked to class") or big ("I got a good grade on a big assignment").

Three Good Things

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Choose one of the following questions to answer about each of the three good things:

Why did this happen?

Why was this good thing meaningful?

How can I experience more of this good thing?

Repeat this exercise every day for one week.

SOCIAL WELLNESS



Social wellness refers to the quality of your relationships with others. Keeping a strong network of people you feel connected to is key to your social wellness and can help fend off feelings of stress, isolation, loneliness or even depression.

Participating in group activities alongside family or friends, joining organizations, being open to new connections, and respecting and nourishing meaningful relationships is key to healthy social wellness. This dimension involves an interest and concern for the needs of others and humankind and contributing to your community.

Social Wellness Questionnaire

When thinking about your social wellness, reflect on the following questions:

1. Are you satisfied with your social life?
2. Are you involved in a college community or group?
3. Do you have a network of supportive family, friends or other social contacts?
4. Are you accepting of the diversity of others?
5. Do you have someone you can talk to about your feelings and/or struggles?
6. Do you participate in social activities that you enjoy?
7. Do you have at least one meaningful relationship in your life?
8. Do you give and take equally in your relationship?

Reflect on how to apply social wellness to your life.

1. What is one strength you can name regarding your social wellness?

2. What is one area you wish to improve?

3. Develop a plan of action for improvement.

Leisure Activities

Engagement in leisure activities is one avenue to connect with others, build relationships and gain some enjoyment. Review this leisure interest checklist to identify activities you may enjoy now or in the future.

Leisure Interest Checklist				
Area	Activity	Have Done in the Past	Currently Do	Interested in Trying
Arts, Crafts, Music and Skills	Acting, theater			
	Anime or comics			
	Board games, card games			
	Cooking, baking			
	Creative writing (poetry, stories)			
	Dancing			
	Fashion and beauty (sewing, hair, nails, makeup)			
	Floristry			
	Gaming			
	Jewelry making			
	Knitting, crocheting			
	Listening to music			
	Listening to podcasts or audiobooks			
	Making media			

Leisure Interest Checklist				
Area	Activity	Have Done in the Past	Currently Do	Interested in Trying
	Painting, drawing			
	Photography			
	Playing music, singing, DJing			
	Pottery, sculpture			
	Puzzles			
	Watching movies			
	Woodworking			
Learning	Courses, adult education			
	Craft classes			
	Educational podcasts, history shows			
	Learning a language			
	Mechanics, woodworking			
	Music lessons			
	Private study, online study			
	Reading non-fiction			
	Thrifting, antiquing			
Out and About	Arcade			
	Cinema, movies			
	Fan conventions			

Leisure Interest Checklist				
Area	Activity	Have Done in the Past	Currently Do	Interested in Trying
	Festivals, cultural events			
	Flea market, garage sales			
	Live music, concerts			
	Museums, art galleries			
	Shopping			
	Theater, comedy shows			
	Travel			
Outdoor	Bird watching			
	Camping, backpacking			
	Ecology, conservation, trail maintenance			
	Exploring parks			
	Fishing			
	Gardening			
	Geocache, Pokémon Go			
	Going to the beach			
	Hammocking			
	Kayaking, canoeing			
	Skiing, snowboarding			
	Sledding, skating			
	Swimming			

Leisure Interest Checklist				
Area	Activity	Have Done in the Past	Currently Do	Interested in Trying
	Visiting gardens or arboretums			
	Walking, hiking			
Personal, Social and Spiritual	Activism, campaigning, political			
	Caring for others			
	Engage in a group (young adult, affinity, etc.)			
	Journaling			
	Meditation			
	Prayer			
	Spending time with pets			
	Visiting others			
	Visiting places of worship			
	Volunteer work			
Sports and Physical Activity	Archery			
	Bowling			
	Boxing, kickboxing			
	Climbing, bouldering			
	Cycling, biking			

Leisure Interest Checklist				
Area	Activity	Have Done in the Past	Currently Do	Interested in Trying
	Dance, gymnastics			
	Disc golf			
	Exercise classes			
	Golf			
	Gym, weight training			
	Horse riding			
	Martial arts			
	Running, jogging			
	Team sports (basketball, soccer, football, etc.)			
	Tennis, pickleball			
	Yoga, pilates			

Social Media

Depending upon its use, social media can facilitate or inhibit wellness. Does social media lift you up or drag you down? Whether social media is a force for good or ill in your life likely comes down to how you use and relate to it. A more intentional and balanced relationship with social media allows you to enjoy the benefits of online interactions while avoiding hits to your self-esteem and well-being.

To achieve this, it's important to take a close look at your social media usage. Review the recommendations and make any needed tune-ups.

Constantly Counting Likes

Instead of posting what you think others will like, post something that expresses a genuine interest, opinion or value.

Find other ways to measure success: did you communicate an important fact, express an opinion that matters to you, show support for someone or spark an interesting conversation?

Instead of viewing your own likes, spend more time liking others' posts that motivate, inspire or amuse you.

Impacting Your Mood

How much time are you spending on social media?

How are you engaging with others on those sites (comparing, arguing vs. engaging and building community)?

What are you consuming? Is it doom and gloom, scary conspiracy theories or extreme political views? Filter, limit or disengage from whatever feels toxic.

Is social media preventing you from being fully present in your offline life? Reduce time on social media or cluster your usage into a few daily sessions that allow you to engage in life offline.

Comparing Yourself to Others

Do you find yourself feeling jealous of someone else's seemingly perfect life? Remember, social media only shows you a tiny, heavily edited version of someone's life.

Are you following someone whose posts are especially triggering or unrealistic? Consider unfriending or snoozing them.

Cut down on social media behaviors that lead to unhelpful comparisons.

Engaging in Conflict

Accept that you will not be able to change others' minds by arguing with them on social media.

Strive to understand others' viewpoints, even if you do not agree.

Step away from conflict that is damaging to you or others.

Airbrushing Your Life

Challenge yourself to be more authentic online.

Post authentic, unfiltered photos.

Try posting more about what you think and feel rather than focusing on appearances.

Neglecting Obligations or Activities

Make a list of what is most important to you. Come up with ways to engage with each value offline.

Find an accountability partner and take initiative to plan an activity.

Spend more time in nature, take a walk through your neighborhood and engage your senses.

Develop a Healthy Social Media Mindset

Turn off notifications.

Take a social media fast/detox.

Understand what need social media is filling for you and identify other ways to meet these needs.

List at least three ways in which you will adapt your social media usage to enhance your wellness:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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