

## **Teaching Guide**

### **Welcome to Wellness**

#### Goals

1. Learn the key elements of personal well-being.
2. Identify specific ways to apply those elements to your life.
3. Make a plan to integrate healthy habits into your lifestyle.

#### Preparation:

Provide a Wellness Travel Guide for each participant.

Study the Teaching Guide and Travel Guide. Consider stories you might share.

Make copies of the evaluation at the end of this Teaching Guide.

#### Introduction:

Each unit in the Parenting Journey can form a 30 – 90 minute lesson. This guide will provide you specific ideas for teaching Wellness.

#### Welcome

Welcome to Wellness along the Parenting Journey

[Give any necessary instructions for housekeeping tasks. You might add a get-acquainted activity, if you have the time and you want to build the relationships among your participants. Look for icebreaker activity ideas at [www.cyfernet.org](http://www.cyfernet.org) .]

#### Start by stating the main idea:

Enjoying wellness takes a little planning and effort. It doesn't happen by accident. But the rewards are worth the effort! When you take time for wellness, you will feel healthy and strong, have energy to invest in your family life, and bring the best of yourself to your parenting.

#### Discussion:

What are some potential stumbling blocks in your journey to wellness?

Let's explore some ideas for overcoming your stumbling blocks and moving toward a life of wellness!

#### **Points of interest**

##### 1. Be Healthy.

Health is part body and part mind. To take care of our bodies, we eat healthy food, exercise and get enough rest. Most of us find it difficult to do these things consistently.

Sometimes it's because we feel too busy or overloaded to put forth the effort of having a healthy lifestyle.

Rather than try to make ourselves do things we hate, we can find enjoyable ways to be healthy. Each of us can make a list of healthy foods and recipes that we love. We are more likely to eat food we love. If we try to get more vegetables in our diet by forcing ourselves to eat a vegetable we dislike, we are not likely to be successful for long. We can pick healthy foods we enjoy or prepare healthy foods in ways that make them more enjoyable.

[Share two or three of your personal favorite healthy recipes with the audience and/or ask them to share any of their favorite healthy eating tips.]

We can limit the unhealthy things we eat. We can also notice the effects of unhealthy foods on us. They make us feel drowsy and sluggish.

As to the issue of exercise, we may hate jogging but enjoy walking with a friend or working in the garden. You can even play kickball or go swimming with your children.

Can you share any other ideas of fun ways to get out and get moving?

We can also establish sleep habits that work well for us. For most people, it is a good idea to go to bed and get up about the same time each day. Do relaxing things before going to bed. Try to get 7 – 9 hours of sleep each night.

[Share or ask someone from the audience to share any other tips for healthy living such as keeping a diet and exercise journal.]

We eat good food if we want a healthy body. If we want a healthy mind, we must get good nourishment for it. That nourishment might include new ideas and positive feelings. We read good books. We notice and enjoy good things in our lives. We talk with thoughtful people. These things nourish our minds.

Can you share any other ideas for nourishing your mind?

We also need exercise for our minds. We can find things we love to do, whether it is cooking, singing, drawing, crafts, talking with friends or writing. Exercise for the mind involves challenging ourselves to use our talents.

When we exercise our minds regularly, we are healthier and happier.

Can you share any other ideas for exercising your mind?

We also need rest for our minds. Some people meditate. Some people pray. Taking a few minutes every day for quiet reflection and appreciation can strengthen us.

Can you share any other ideas for resting your mind?

Stress may seem like an enemy. We may wish we had no stress in our lives. But a certain amount of stress helps us—it causes us to act and grow. Stress is a problem when too many things hit us at once or when we worry too much. The way we think can turn an inconvenience into a crisis.

When too many problems arise at one time, we can get help from other people. Or we can choose to deal only with the most pressing needs.

The biggest stress problem is probably when we get upset about stresses. We may worry or imagine the worst. The healthiest people deal with extra stress by doing things that make them healthier. They may get help with the tasks, talk with a friend, focus on positives, exercise faith or set priorities.

Optimism can make us healthier. When we believe that things will work out and that we will be better for our hard experiences, we cope better with life's stresses.

It is also important to make a place in our lives for wholesome recreation. We all need to take time to have fun. Take a break to do something you really enjoy.

Can you share any other healthy ways to deal with stress?

2. Keep learning and growing.

Sometimes we get stuck. We do the same old things and become very bored with ourselves and our lives. Then we don't have the energy to do anything. That's not good.

One of the best ways to be a healthy human is to keep learning and growing. People may do this in different ways. Some people keep learning and growing by taking time for reflection. They grow from quiet time to think.

Other people keep learning and growing by reading, listening to speeches or talking with knowledgeable people. Some people like a combination of both more quiet and the active ways of learning and growing.

Can you share ways you keep learning and growing?

Most people benefit from projects. The best project for you might be to plant a garden, take a picture, read a book, memorize a poem, paint a room, train a dog, make a scrapbook or write your life's story. We grow when we undertake a project and invest ourselves in accomplishing it.

What kinds of projects challenge and gratify you?

3. Build strong relationships.

It pays to have good people in our lives. There is a trick in choosing who to spend time with. Anyone we choose will have faults. We must choose imperfect people and accept their faults and humanness. We must also appreciate and learn from the strengths of our friends.

However, there are some people who encourage us to do things that are not healthy. They may cause us to be angry, addicted or dishonest. Such friends should be avoided. Healthy friends help us to be true to our own values. Good friends may have different personalities, backgrounds or values, but, if they help us honor our values, they can be good friends.

[Share a story of an experience you had with a friend that honored or strengthened your values. Ask participants if anyone has an experience to share.]

Our friendships will usually include many family members – aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, etc. It is good for us and our children to be connected to extended family.

Getting along peacefully with extended family members almost always requires us to overlook faults and irritations. We and our children can look for positive qualities in family members and plan activities that are likely to be fun. We can even invite family members to tell stories and show pictures related to their lives and experiences.

[Share one of your joyful experiences with family members. Ask the participants if anyone would like to share one of their experiences.]

### Conclusion:

#### **Six Things to do in Wellness**

1. Eat reasonable amounts of healthy food.
2. Find enjoyable ways of exercising.
3. Get enough rest.
4. Manage your stress.
5. Build relationships that provide friendship and support.
6. Discover and use your talents.

#### **Plan your stay.**

Pick something to work on this week. Maybe you want to make a list of favorite healthy recipes, start walking in the evenings, go to the library to find a good book or visit an old friend.

Map out the details of your plan. What exactly do you plan to do? When will be the best time? Do you need to do anything to prepare yourself to take part in your new plan? For example, do you need to get some walking shoes or borrow a recipe book or get a library card?

Decide some small thing you can do this week and write out your plan:

What you plan to do:

The best time to do this:

Ideas to prepare my child:

How I can prepare myself:

People who can help me:

Wellness is an important part of the parenting journey. We hope you will gain strength from your experiences there. Here are some ideas to be healthier.

-Read ideas about taking care of the parent, including nutrition and health, dealing with stress, being happy, dealing with anger, the power of optimism, making peace with yourself or using your talents at [www.arfamilies.org](http://www.arfamilies.org).

-Look for a class in your area on stress, nutrition, exercise or a hobby of interest.

-Join a club where you can spend time with people of similar interests.

-Read a book about wellness and growth such as Martin Seligman's Authentic Happiness.

-Go to [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) for healthy diet and exercise information.

-Get ideas from another person who has a healthy and balanced life.

-Get more ideas by going to the national extension family website, [www.cyfernet.org](http://www.cyfernet.org), and searching on health, nutrition, stress, friendship or talents.

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**Evaluation**  
**Live in Wellness**

As a result of participating in this workshop, I . . .

learned new ideas about how to live well

<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</i>			<i>Strongly Agree</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>

identified a specific new idea for living my life more effectively

<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</i>			<i>Strongly Agree</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>

made a specific plan for something I want to do this week

<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</i>			<i>Strongly Agree</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>