

# **“Mental Health and Wellness is More Important than Ever**

Presented by Barbara Granger  
Family Engagement Specialist, University of Texas,  
Institute for Excellence in Mental Health

# Workshop Objectives

- Mental Health vs. Mental Wellness
- How this past year has affected all of us
- How to ensure Mental Wellness

# Mental Health, What is it Really?

- ▶ **Mental Health** is the combination of our emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, and act.
- ▶ It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.
- ▶ Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. It can be negatively impacted by such things as living in a difficult marriage, struggling with aging parents, or poor work/life balance.
- ▶ *Mental Health is all about how we think, feel, and behave. The term 'mental health' is sometimes used to mean an absence of a mental disorder."*

# So what is Mental Wellness?



- ▶ Wellness is the act of practicing daily healthy habits to reach better physical and mental health outcomes so that instead of just surviving, you're thriving
- ▶ Mental wellness is defined as having both an awareness of your emotions and the ability to manage and express those feelings in a healthy and age-appropriate manner.
- ▶ It includes having both good mental and physical health, high life satisfaction, and a sense of meaning. More generally, wellbeing is just feeling good about yourself and your life.

# How does Mental Health Impact your overall Wellness?

- ▶ The most important focus we can have is to be Healthy and Well.
- ▶ Mental health issues and illness crop up for everyone, especially in our fast-paced, stressed society. Mental health is related to physical health in that sometimes there are problems that need treatment. So, get treatment, and get better. People with actual mental health disorders can lead a very successful and fulfilling life.
- ▶ Mental Wellness needs to be our overall goal.
- ▶ And instead of fixating on what's wrong with people, let's focus on what's right!



<https://createnewstarts.com/mental-health-vs-mental-wellness/>

# A Year in Review



# How has THIS Affected Each of Us ?

- ▶ During the pandemic, about 4 in 10 adults in the U.S. have reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder, a share that has been largely consistent, up from one in ten adults who reported these symptoms from January to June 2019.
- ▶ A Tracking Poll from July 2020 also found that many adults are reporting specific negative impacts on their mental health and well-being, such as difficulty sleeping (36%) or eating (32%), increases in alcohol consumption or substance use (12%), and worsening chronic conditions (12%), due to worry and stress over the coronavirus. As the pandemic wears on, ongoing and necessary public health measures expose many people to experiencing situations linked to poor mental health outcomes, such as **isolation** and **job loss**.
- ▶ The pandemic has disproportionately affected the health of communities of color. Non-Hispanic Black adults (48%) and Hispanic or Latino adults (46%) are more likely to report symptoms of anxiety and depressive disorder than Non-Hispanic White adults (41%). Historically, these communities of color have face challenges accessing mental health care.

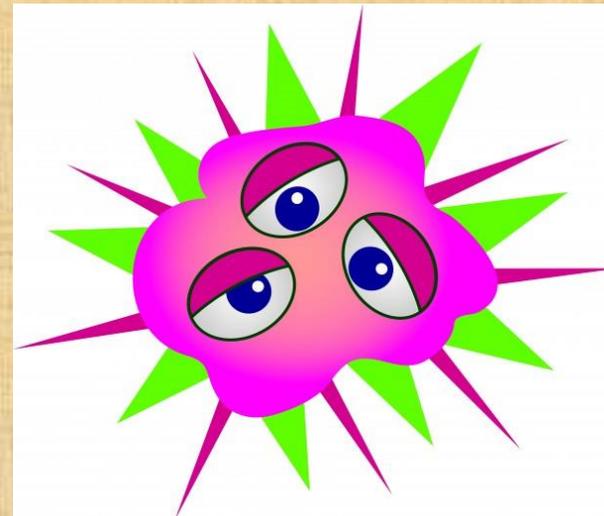
<https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/>

- At least half of households in the four largest U.S. cities—New York City (53%), Los Angeles (56%), Chicago (50%), and **Houston (63%)**—report financial problems, including depleted savings and trouble paying bills or affording medical care. Many of these experiences are concentrated among Black and Latino households, households with annual incomes below \$100,000, and households experiencing job or wage losses since the start of the outbreak.
- At least **four in ten** Latino, Black, and Native American households report using up all or most of their household savings during this time.
- **One in five** households in the United States (20%) reports household members cannot get medical care for serious problems. A majority unable to get care when needed (57%) report negative health consequences as a result.
- **More than 1 in 3** households that include anyone with a disability report facing severe financial problems. Many experiencing difficulties are affording utilities and food.
- Forty-three percent of rural households report any adult household members have lost their jobs, been furloughed, or had wages or hours reduced since the start of the outbreak, with two-thirds of these households (66%) reporting severe financial problems.

<https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2020/09/the-impact-of-coronavirus-on-households-across-america.html>

# The Pandemic, You and Your Family

- ▶ The COVID-19 pandemic has uniquely affected children and families by disrupting routines, changing relationships and roles, and altering usual child care, school, and recreational activities.
- ▶ We are only beginning to come out of the “COVID fog”. It may be years before we really understand all the affects this pandemic has had on our lives.
- ▶ How have you been personally affected?
  - ❖ Education
  - ❖ economy
  - ❖ relationships
  - ❖ physical health (eating disorders)
  - ❖ health care
  - ❖ socially,



# Ensuring Mental Wellness

- ▶ Remember Mental Wellness is about being aware of our circumstances and taking action.

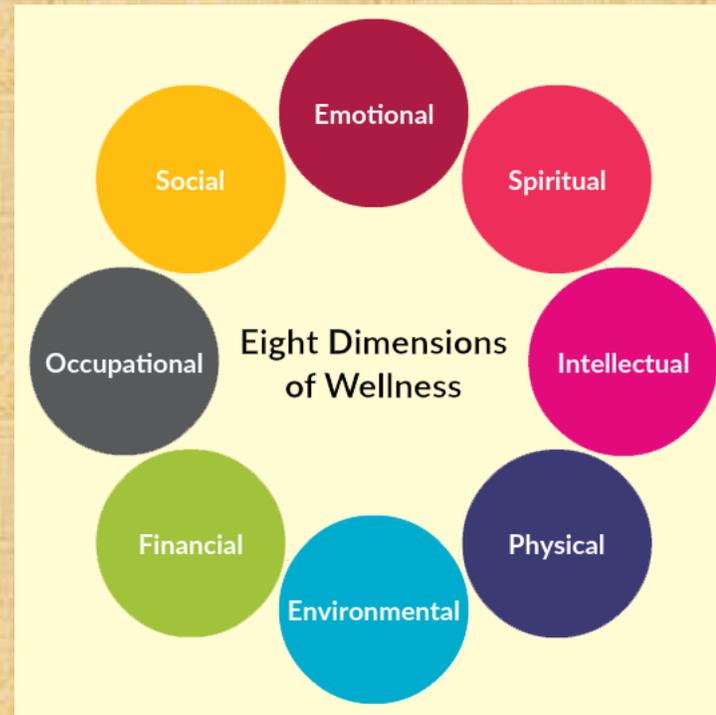


- ▶ Being Intentional can turn anything into wellness.

- ▶ Examine your current status. Check for areas that may need attention, then make an action plan, whether in writing or in your head. Accountability is always helpful for follow through though.

# Wellness Areas to Examine

- ▶ Are we back to a good routine for sleep and rest?
- ▶ Are we back to exercise or movement
- ▶ Making time with friends and family
- ▶ Planning time to unplug
- ▶ What is your creative outlet? journaling, reading, art...
- ▶ Getting back to healthy habits
- ▶ Being organized / planning ahead
- ▶ Intentional positive thinking
- ▶ Showing Gratitude or random acts of kindness
- ▶ Maintaining a sense of hope, and
- ▶ Lots of deep breathing!



# When Wellness Seems Far Away

