

6

Steps to Social
Wellness

All living beings have the need to socialize. The act of healthy socialization is embedded in their genes. History has shown that survival has always depended on social interactions. How many days can you go without sharing your thoughts and feelings with someone else?

Social wellness is important. Without it, the world would have a difficult time creating healthy productive communities. It is through social wellness that you create meaningful relationships and have a support system of family and friends.



Looking at the various dimensions of social wellness helps to understand why human interaction is important. Social wellness allows you to live in harmony with other human beings in a positive way. It allows you to have positive interactions with others during work and leisure time. It is involved in developing and building close friendships and intimate relationships. Through this, people learn to express their thoughts and feelings, practice empathy and effective listening and improve communication skills.

Healthy social wellness leads people to care for others, live for the common good of others and be involved in service-oriented activities. It is important to understand that the act of giving also provides something for individual wellness.

How much stronger do you feel when you allow members of your personal community to contribute to your life? Take a minute and think about it. Remember the times in your life

when you were going through difficulty and had the support of friends and family.

Social wellness affects both physical and emotional health. Some people say that the measure of your health is determined by the number of close personal friends you have, and how much time is spent with them.

It is important to remember that people need to have new interactions in their lives too, in order to build new lasting relationships.

A study from Duke University indicates that social isolation has been clinically linked to chronic illness, such as heart disease, lowering immune system and a number of mental health illnesses, such as depression. The study also showed high impact on the recovery process from illness or injury. It takes longer for isolated people to recover than sociable people do.

People who maintain their social network and support systems do better under stress. It even affects mood and self-esteem. The more you interact with others, the more positive and self-confident you feel.

People defiantly benefit from social wellness. Here are six ideas to help you get started.

- ▶ Have face-to-face interactions with people daily.
- ▶ Become more engaged in social and community projects.
- ▶ Volunteer time to groups you are passionate about.
- ▶ Support your family, friends and neighborhood.
- ▶ Attend cultural and artistic events to meet people from diverse backgrounds.
- ▶ Join a club or organization that interests you.

Encourage yourself to engage in one social activity a month. Most important, remember to take the time to know the people in your life. Social wellness is your healthy source of life and your key to survival.