



This product is meant to accompany "[Peer Workforce Well-Being in the Southeast](#)" presented by Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network on July 27, 2021
You can watch the webinar on-demand [here](#).

Peer Workforce Well-Being in the Southeast

Wellness is an active and ongoing process of choosing and doing things that promote health and fulfillment in one's life.

Wellness is **MORE** than being "illness free."

The 7 Dimensions of Wellness



Physical: Protecting our physical wellness includes good physical activity, nutrition, and sleep. It means taking things that enhance our health into our bodies and avoiding things that damage our health. As folks in recovery, peers know well the damage and stress that some things can cause for their physical health.



Emotional: Being "emotionally well" means being able to cope effectively with everyday life and having the ability to express one's feelings in a healthy way. This area might require vigilance and a lot of work! Some things (such as adverse childhood experiences and trauma) get in the way of one's emotional wellness.



Intellectual: Our brain is the most important organ in our bodies. How can we stimulate our minds and continue to learn and discover? How can we keep our minds active and alive? When learning stops, that can be the end for a lot of people. Intellectual wellness means including things that activate our minds throughout our lives.



Spiritual: Spiritual wellness involves asking big questions: Why am I here? What is my purpose and meaning? Spiritual wellness means developing an appreciation for the big picture, establishing peace and harmony, and being consistent with our values and beliefs.



Environmental: Our environment includes our everyday surroundings. Are we safe, are we comfortable? Can we fulfill our goals and desires within this environment? This also refers to how we take care of the earth, our communities, and our family and friends.



Social: Social wellness is all about developing a sense of connection! For folks in long-term recovery, social connection is extremely important. Being disconnected is an experience that is common among people in recovery. Building connections with people who care about and support you (and whom you support as well) is imperative.



Occupational: Occupational wellness comes from the satisfaction and enrichment that we gain through work. Do we gain personal fulfillment from our careers while still balancing our personal lives? Work can and should be something that gives you a sense of meaning and purpose while fostering financial wellness.

Social and Environmental Stresses

Social and environmental stresses can make it difficult for people to maintain their wellness. These stressors include poverty, lack of education, racism, and access to healthy food.

Poverty

When experiencing survival mode all the time, always wondering about the next paycheck or next meal, that level of stress is damaging to the body and mind. Poverty is not always about a lack of money, but also a lack of time. How can all areas of wellness be attended to if 2 hours a day are spent on a bus?



Lack of Education



People with higher levels of education statistically live happier, healthier lives. People with lower education and lower paying jobs often have more difficulties accessing safe communities and healthy food sources than higher education counterparts. The interconnections between education, jobs, income, and the neighborhoods can affect one's well-being.

Racism

There are disparities in health and mental health care for minority groups, and these disparities play a large role in the ability to protect one's wellness.



Modern Food Supply



The majority of the food that we have available does not support wellness. If our food does not have good nutritional value, how can it support our wellness? Remember, the quality of what we put into our bodies directly affects our well-being.

It's **NEVER** too late to get in touch with recovery and practice wellness in one's life. We see stories all the time of people starting over in new careers or pursuits in their later years. These people prove that it is never too late to do what we need to do to invest in our well-being.

YOU!
CAN*

Strategies for Peer Wellness



Spirituality

Breath, our tool for relaxation. This tool can take us from stress to relaxation, it slows our heart rate, lowers our blood pressure, and decreases stress hormones. As CPS, this is something we can model for others. As you breathe, connect with your body. Slowing down and listening to one's body takes daily practice. Getting out and sitting in nature is so important. In nature, we see balance, resilience, and we see relationships. Connections to a higher power are also valuable.



WRAP and WHAM

5 Key Recovery Concepts in WRAP: Hope, Personal Responsibility, Education, Self-Advocacy, and Support. These concepts help strengthen recovery. There are no limits to recovery and wellness. **WRAP** and **WHAM** can help increase confidence, enabled us to ask others for help, and show people they are not alone in their struggle. CPS know that our greatest threats come from within, but we can gain the tools to combat these threats.



Dual Recovery

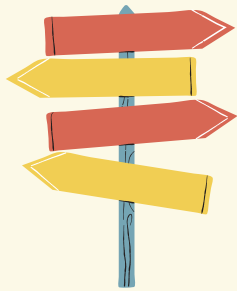
Recovering from mental health and substance use disorder challenges at the same time. These might be things like AA, Al-Anon, Double Trouble, Y'all Recovery, Celebrate Recovery, and other programs with gratitude at the forefront. With support, a CPS learned that they had tools to be able to work through things. The more challenges they were able to overcome without resorting to substance use to cover up their emotions, the stronger they felt. Now they live a life full of family, friends, work, and community efforts.



Connection

The Body-Mind-Spirit Connection, Interconnection, Connection to Self, and Connection to Others! There is an intense link between your body, mind, and spirit. This connectedness intertwines all of these elements. When one part is down, it can affect the other areas. **R2ISE** is a Recovery Community Organization that promotes recovery through the arts. Peers are encouraged to come as they are and be open to putting together pieces that celebrate their journey of wellness and recovery. A CPS shared they were able to reconnect with themselves during the COVID-19 pandemic through painting and visual arts.

Maintaining Our Wellness



What are some signs of eroding wellness? Here are a few:

- Excessive worrying, fear, sadness
- Confusion or problems concentrating
- Mood changes
- Prolonged or strong feelings of anger
- Avoiding friends or social activities

We continue to change, and our wellness changes as we grow. What we need from our careers, our friends, our family, and from ourselves will change throughout our lives to match our personal definition of wellness.

Peers are allowed to make mistakes. Peers are allowed to grow and change and develop new outlooks. The peer workforce recognizes that each peer is on a unique journey of wellness and recovery. There are times when peers are on the path together, but sometimes those paths differ.

For More Information and to Hear Peers Share Experiences:

Breath work: Breathing techniques and exercises to enhance wellness.

[BREATHE-OUT Burnout Reduction](#)

MHTTC BREATHE Webinar Series:

[Module 1](#) Reminding Ourselves to BREATHE in Our Work

[Module 2](#) Managing Our Workloads

[Module 3](#) Connecting with Colleagues

[WRAP \(Wellness Recovery Action Plan\)](#) and [WHAM \(Whole Health Action](#)

[Management\)](#): Whole-health and person-centered approaches that strengthen the peer workforce by teaching and reinforcing stress management, physical activity, healthy eating, service to others, and spiritual practices and beliefs.

WHAM guide, provided by SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health

Solutions: <https://www.center4healthandsdc.org/wham-training-guide.html>

[Alcoholics Anonymous \(AA\)](#): 12-step program for folks who have had issues with alcohol.

[Double Trouble](#): 12-step fellowship for people who have experienced co-occurring substance use issues and mental disorders

[Y'all Recovery](#): Recovery meetings for those with alcohol and/or substance use issues.

[Al-Anon](#): Program for families and friends of people with alcohol issues

[R2ise To Recovery](#): Art-focused peer support group for people with mental health and/or substance use issues.