



YELLOW ZONE

a place where you can flourish

creating a Yellow Zone for the
aging population

Acknowledgement

The Yellow Zone resiliency initiative was developed by Brittany Pfannenstein & Danielle Protivinsky, Stearns County Health and Human Services Public Health Coordinators. Dani and Brittany have developed the Yellow Zone Initiative by compiling evidence-based research and practical resources to be used in the Stearns County community. The Yellow Zone initiative is a continuation of community ACE's initiatives. With influence from Dr. Corey Keyes, and other organizations; Yellow Zone can support the community as a whole to enhance flourishing.

The research used in creating the Yellow Zone Initiative was supported by the wealth of positive psychology research conducted by Dr. Corey Keyes. We would like to show our gratitude to Dr. Corey Keyes for sharing his pearls of wisdom with us during the course of developing this toolkit.

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Stearns County

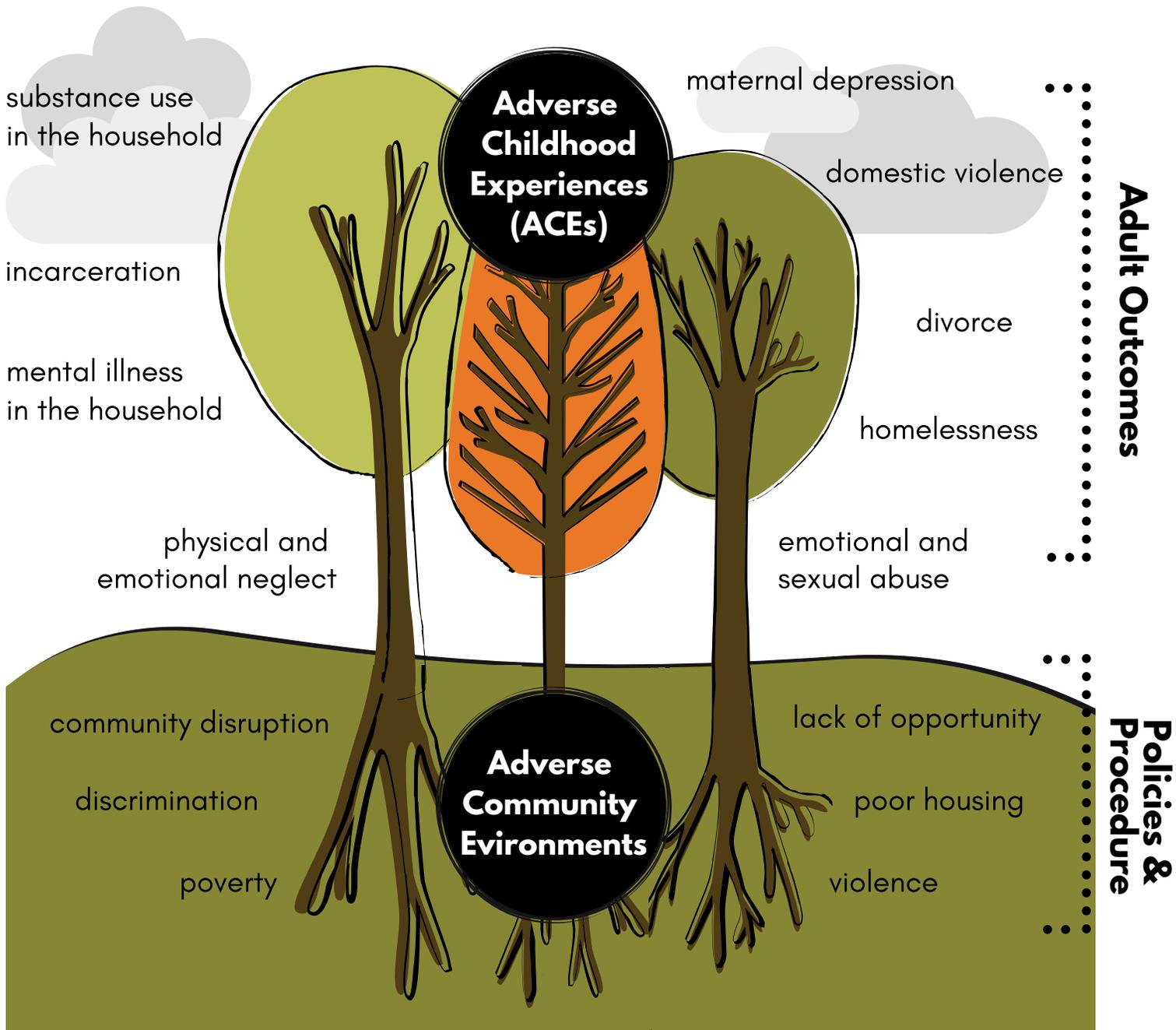
Everyone deserves opportunity for Mental Health and Well-Being.

- Brains are built through experience. The interaction between our biology and experiences shapes the chemicals and structures of our brains, particularly during early childhood and adolescence.
- Fear, trauma, and chronic stress negatively impacts Mental Health and Well-Being. While we all experience stress and hard times, the cumulative impact of chronic or intense stress is real. It gets built into our bodies and is passed on to the next generation.
- Where we live, learn, work, and play impacts our Mental Health and Well-Being. This includes structures and environments that are safe, nurturing, inviting, toxin free, and facilitate relationships, community and culture.
- Resilience is not enough in the face of oppression. Oppression is bad for our Mental Health and Well-Being. Intentional systemic changes to end oppression are essential to help individuals, families and communities thrive.
- Physical health & Mental Health and Well-Being are intertwined. When we experience physical illness, injury or pain it has a negative impact on our Mental Health and Well-being.

Everyone and every system has a role and responsibility in ensuring our collective Mental Health and Well-Being. We all benefit when public and private organizations work together.

- Mental Health and Well-Being happens in and through community. We can spread and protect Mental Health and Well-Being by building positive relationships, social connections and drawing on community and cultural assets.
- Mental Health and Well-Being requires a sense of purpose and power. To truly experience Mental Health and Well-Being we need to feel that we have the power to shape our world and change our lives and conditions for the better. For many, historical trauma is a reality that takes away our sense of purpose and power and continues to be part of our lived experience and reality.
- Positive relationships are central to Mental Health and Well-Being. Relationships provide meaning and facilitate skill development and feelings of belonging. Lack of positive relationships and isolation are detrimental. Positive relationships are not automatic; families and communities need information, resources, and other supports to help cultivate and sustain them.
- Culture shapes our definitions and understanding of Mental Health and Well-Being. It is OK and healthy for individuals and communities to have different perspectives on what it means to be well and how to achieve well-being. Culture is a source of healing, connection and strength.
- Everyone needs opportunity to learn and practice skills to manage life and engage in the world. Skills to manage stress, find balance and focus, and engage socially, are critical components that should be cultivated throughout the lifespan in both formal and informal settings. Skills and experiences that help people feel valuable and engage in their family, community and economy are also critical.

THE PAIR OF ACES



The **Building Community Resilience Pair of ACEs Tree** illustrates the relationship between adversity within an individual and adversity within the community. The **leaves** on the tree represent the “symptoms” of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACEs can increase a person’s risk for chronic stress and adverse coping mechanisms, and result in lifelong chronic illness such as depression, heart disease, obesity and substance use. The tree is planted in **poor soil** that is steeped in systemic inequities, robbing it of nutrients necessary to support a thriving community. Adverse Community Environments create a negative cycle of ever worsening soil that results in withering leaves on the trees. ACEs are a national public health concern that demonstrates the need for policy, practice and programs to support and build resilience.

Learn more at www.go.gwu.edu/BCRvideos

BUILDING A FLOURISHING COMMUNITY

in central minnesota

% of adults that as children...

lived with an adult with mental illness
17% **17%** **19%**
 National MN Stearns

experienced physical abuse from a parent or other adult
18% **16%** **15%**
 National MN Stearns

witnessed domestic violence
18% **14%** **15%**
 National MN Stearns

Children in Out of Home Placement per 1,000 kids ages 0-17
11.4 **11.8**
 MN Stearns

Households with income less than poverty level
13% **10%**
 MN Stearns

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

% of 8th grade students who have experienced...

a parent or adult on the household that hit, beat, kicked or physically hurt them in any way
12% **12%**
 MN Stearns

a parent or adult on the household that regularly swears, insults or puts them down
14% **12%**
 MN Stearns

Students who report being connected to a caring adult
60% **62%**
 MN Stearns

Serious crimes committed per 100,000 residents
2,363 **3,108**
 MN Stearns

Adverse Community Environments

% of adults that as children experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

38%
 National

37%
 Stearns

62% of Stearns County adults that as children experienced 2 or more ACEs living at less than or equal to 200% of poverty level

Sources: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2016 Stearns County Community Health Survey, MDH Out-of-Home Care and Permanency Report, Minnesota Compass, 2016 Minnesota Student Survey

The Science of Flourishing

Mental health is the psychological, emotional, and social aspects that affect our well-being whereas mental illness is a condition where the psychological, emotional, and social aspects of our life affect our well-being to the point where day to day life is difficult such as depression and anxiety.

Dr. Corey Keyes created the dual Mental Health Continuum acknowledging that mental health and mental illness are interrelated, but have distinct dimensions. One continua portrays the presence or absence of mental illness whereas the other continua portrays the presence or absence of mental health.

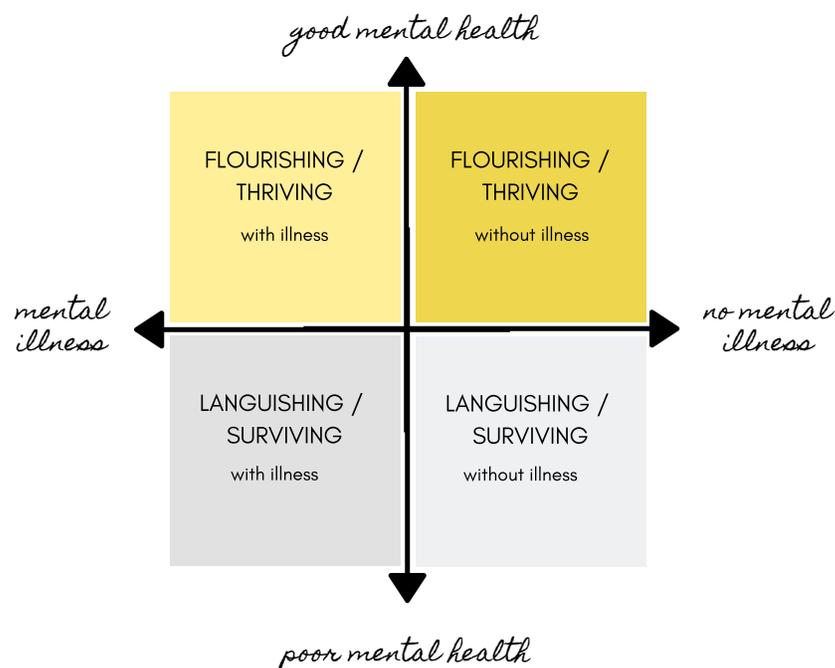
Keyes denotes that an individual is “flourishing” when they are not merely free of mental illness, but rather filled with high levels of emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being.

According to Keyes, only 17% of individuals are truly flourishing.

Dr. Keyes’ research consistently demonstrates that individuals who are diagnosed as languishing, either with or without mental illness, are functioning worse in terms of physical disease, healthcare utilization, work productivity, and psychosocial functioning (Keyes 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007). This demonstrates the importance of helping people find pathways from a state of low mental health (languishing) to high mental health (flourishing).

Flourishing individuals are truly living rather than merely existing.

The Mental Health Continuum



Introduction to the Yellow Zone

The Yellow Zone is an initiative created by Stearns County Public Health to help schools, work places, and the community establish an environment that supports the positive well-being of healthy, productive and flourishing individuals.

A Yellow Zone is a place that cultivates well-being through five basic pillars: **Helping, Socializing, Learning, Playing, and Spirituality**. All five of these pillars are components that nurture the psychological, emotional, and social aspects of mental health.

Stearns County Human Services is dedicated to supporting the mental health and well-being of Stearns County residents through this Public Health initiative.

A Guide to Creating a Yellow Zone

The Yellow Zone Guide is a free resource created by Stearns County Human Services. This Public Health initiative is aimed at improving mental well-being among the community. The Yellow Zone Toolkit addresses the difference between mental health and mental well-being and provides easy to use information, strategies and promotional resources to cultivate an environment of flourishing for the aging population, 55+ years.

How to Use this Guide

The Yellow Zone Aging Toolkit was created to empower individuals to create a culture of flourishing. You can create a Yellow Zone for aging adults by simply utilizing the strategies and promotional materials created by Stearns County Public Health that are provided through out this guide. It can be utilized in the by individuals, employers, employees, their families and the community.

Review the 5 pillars and identify areas of languishing that could be targeted with the provided resources and get started today! By working together, we can overcome the barriers that lead to languishing to build an environment of flourishing through cognitive growth and learning.



YELLOW ZONE

Less than
20 percent
of the US population
is flourishing. ¹

3 : 1

the ratio of positive to
negative emotions that
serve as a tipping point
for whether people live
a flourishing life. ²

40 percent

of a person's
happiness is
attributed to their
thoughts, plans and
behaviors. ³

A Place Where You Can Flourish.

Created by Stearns County Public Health

To *flourish* means to live within an optimal range of human functioning, one that has high levels of emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being, according to Dr. Corey Keyes.

Individuals with less than flourishing mental health report more physical ailments and chronic disease, miss more days of work, use more health care (more prescriptions, more hospitalizations, more visits for physical, mental, emotional reasons), are more likely to die prematurely, and are more likely to develop mental illness.

5 Yellow Zone Pillars

Help - Socialize - Learn - Play - Spiritual

A Yellow Zone is an environment that cultivates well-being through 5 pillars, which nurture the psychological, emotional, and social aspects of mental health. As a result, a Yellow Zone will promote flourishing among individuals.

You can create a Yellow Zone by utilizing the tools and resources provided through out the Yellow Zone Toolkit.

YELLOW ZONE

for the aging population

Creating environments that support a culture of flourishing for the 55+ population.

Everybody deserves to live with a sense of positive mental well-being. It's an important aspect of healthy aging! Establishing an environment that is a Yellow Zone for the aging population contributes to flourishing individuals by supporting positive well-being. By introducing the 5 Yellow Zone Pillars, the environment evolves into a place where people perceive their day-to-day existence as positive and rewarding.

As an aging adult, "mental well-being" may not be an area that is talked often about. By exploring well-being, individuals can gain new insights that can contribute to a more satisfying life and lead to flourishing. We all possess unique inner lives that are portrayed through strong beliefs, fluid thoughts, unique perceptions, and shifting emotions. These drive our actions and shape our overall sense of what it means to be human! Most importantly, they affect our physical wellness, relationships, and general quality of life.

4 key factors that affect mental health and well-being of aging adults:

participation in meaningful activities

physical health

relationships

living conditions and sense of support

"Aging is not lost youth - but a new stage of opportunity & strength."

- Betty Friedan

HEALTH FOR ALL.



YELLOW ZONE

Kind people have
23 percent
less cortisol (the
stress hormone)
and age slower
than the average
population! ²

Of people who
volunteer -
94 percent
say it improves
their mood.

96 percent
says it enriches
their sense of
purpose in life.

78 percent
say it reduces stress. ³

HEALTH FOR ALL.

A Place Where You Can Flourish.

help

The most powerful and simple way to increase your well-being daily is to do 1 deliberate act of kindness for someone else. Research has proven that helping others is actually a core need for overall well-being. Doing an act of kindness decreases stress, improves happiness, lowers blood pressure, release "feel good" hormones and even inspire others! The key to is to do something that pulls you out of your normal routine, something extra, special, and remarkable to improve the happiness of someone else. In fact, kindness is contagious! Kindness can improve the happiness of the giver, receiver and any observers. This is why it is common to see people "pay it forward." ¹

Holding a handshake or a hug for at least 6 seconds releases oxytocin, the neurochemical that helps us feels connected and loved.

And did you also know that kindness is teachable? "It's kind of like weight training, we found that people can actually build up their compassion 'muscle' and respond to others' suffering with care and a desire to help." - Dr. Ritchie Davidson , University of Wisconsin

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

Random Acts of Kindness (RAOK) can be a very simple, yet effective way to brighten another person's day. Think of it as "bucket filling," which refers to a system that encourages individuals to fill up each other's invisible buckets by doing RAOK.

"Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible." – Dalai Lama

Examples: RAOK in the Workplace

Write Thank You or Complimentary Notes for Another Person

Has a friend helped you recently? Did someone send you a birthday card? Write down your appreciation and give it to them!

Create an RAOK Acknowledgement Jar

Setup a jar with strips of paper and a pen next to it for people to acknowledge someone else's work. Read the acknowledgements aloud during lunch time.

Make a RAOK Bulletin Board

Provide post it notes for individuals to display the RAOK they are doing for others to inspire and motivate others to do the same.

Pass It On! Recognize kindness around you and be kind to others.

VOLUNTEER WORK

Community Partnerships

Reach out to local schools, libraries and other youth serving agencies and offer assistance. Often times children love volunteer story tellers, classroom helpers, etc!

Donation Drives

Hold a donation drive for a local charity, shelter, food shelf or Goodwill.

Participate in the Community

Arrange for a group to volunteer through out the community.

This could take place at a food packing event, community shelters, libraries, etc.

RAOK

Lead by Example!

Smile.

Invite a friend to lunch.

Give someone a compliment.

Leave a random positive note.

Say hello to a stranger.

Send an encouraging letter.

Enjoy lunch with someone.

Write down your favorite quality about someone and give it to them.

Bring in treats for your friends.

Offer your help when time permits.

Let go of any grudges and forgive mistakes.

Leave change in the vending machine.

Leave a used book.

Be kind to yourself.

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To offset our negative bias, which we all have as a survival mechanism, we must experience

3 good

things for every

1 negative

experience

for our mood to

“break even.”

To cultivate greater positive emotion, we must have a

6 : 1 ration

ration for every bad experience, we must have

6 positive
positive experiences.³

HEALTH FOR ALL.

A Place Where You Can Flourish.

socialize

Express gratitude each and every day. Research has proven that socializing is actually a core need for overall well-being. Establishing social connections, listening skills, and participating in activities like gratitude; we can build our resiliency and flourish.

Gratitude is associated with optimism and has been determined that grateful people are happier, receive more social support, are less stressed, and are less depressed. Research shows people who have a high level of gratitude have strengthened cardiac and immune systems, decreased stress, anxiety, depression and headaches, higher levels of happiness, improved emotional intelligence and increased self esteem.¹

For 1-2 weeks before bed, write down 3 good things that happened to you that day and what your role was in them. It gives you a mental health boost for 6-12 months!²

People who have one or more close friendships are happier. Take time out of your day to build social connections. During these conversations, focus on being present and truly listen.

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Research shows only about 10 percent of our happiness depends on our situation, which means that WE are responsible for our own happiness! One major component to one's happiness is resilience and the ability to manage stress. Resilience is a learned skill and the more it is practiced, the better we become at it. One way to build one's resilience is to express gratitude often. We can do this by practicing being content and focusing on what we have, not on what we don't. People who express gratitude regularly are happier, have stronger immune systems, and are more productive (up to 50%) than those who don't. To create a community-wide gratitude practice, start by encouraging people to practice it! This builds a strong bond among the community, but also boosts their individual well-being. Added bonus: Gratitude is contagious. Expressing it regularly will build a positive culture throughout your environment.

Examples: Strategies for the Aging Population

3 Good Things

Three Good Things is an evidence-based tool that refocuses your mind on the positive, instead of the negative. For 1-2 weeks before bed, write down 3 good things that happened to you that day and what your role was in them. It gives you a mental health boost for 6-12 months! You can even designate a notebook as your Gratitude Journal. By the end of the 2 weeks, you will have a huge list to reflect on. Remember: Positive things can be big or small! A smile, a hug, holding the door for someone, sunshine, blue sky, warm weather, cozy nights, laughter, giving compliments, etc.

Write a Gratitude Note

Write a gratitude note to a friend or someone you care about. If possible, take the note you wrote and read it aloud to the person you wrote it for or mail it to them.

A Gratitude Display Board

Create a gratitude board where people are encouraged to give someone a shout out for something they did or the support they provided.

21 Days of Gratefulness Challenge

Track 3 things you're grateful for everyday for 21 days. Don't forget to reflect on this Challenge when it is completed!

According to Psychology Today, there are **7 scientifically proven benefits for expressing gratitude:**

- Gratitude opens the door to new relationships
- Gratitude improves physical health
- Gratitude improves psychological health
- Gratitude enhances empathy and reduces aggression
- Grateful people sleep better
- Gratitude improves self-esteem
- Gratitude increases mental strength

socialize

PROMOTING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

People who have one or more close friendships are happier. Take time out of your day to build social connections. During these conversations, focus on being present and truly listen.

Examples: Strategies for the Aging Population

Start Club or Group

Think about activities that may be of interest. Gardening? Sewing? Cooking? Sports? Meeting up with others on a regular basis is a great way to meet new people and enjoy experiences with those who share similar interests.

Spotlight

Each week, ask an individual to make an "About Me" board to display. Have them include facts that others may not know about them so everyone gets to know each other on a more personal level.

Share Goals on a Whiteboard

Get a whiteboard where people write their wellness goals. Things like "go for a walk 3 times per week", "attend a cooking class", or "read 10 books this year" are some good ones to get people started.

Morning Coffee

Schedule a weekly coffee break, preferably in the beginning of the week, for individuals to come and socialize together. This can be a great time to verbalize events happening through out the week, too!

High-Five!

Create cutouts with individual's names on it and paste it to a magnet. Then buy a white board and put all the names up on it. Leave some dryerase markers out so people can call-out another individual for something positive they did.

Organize a Book Club

Reading interesting books allows individuals time to share ideas on a wide range of topics. Select a book each quarter and allow people to form small groups to read and review.

Walking Breaks

Establish set times each day for individuals to take a walking break together. This also helps the group get physical exercise and boost those happy hormones!

Arrange Time with Family

When there is free time, encourage individuals to offer to babysit grand kids or invite a loved one to lunch. These are great ways to maintain those familial relationships and stay involved in the lives of those who mean the most.

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**The top
7 benefits
of learning
a new skill:**

**Your brain chemistry
changes.**

**Your learning speed
increases.**

**You make connections
between skill areas.**

**You become a more
interesting person.**

It fights boredom.

**You adapt better to
change.**

**You could stave off
dementia. ²**

HEALTH FOR ALL.

A Place Where You Can Flourish.

learn

Focus on learning something new each and every day. Research has proven that learning is actually a core need for psychological well-being because as human beings, we have a natural desire to learn and progress. It is through learning that we build confidence and a sense of self-efficacy. Studies also highlight the effects of learning new things, which includes building emotional resilience, social capabilities, positive health behaviors and better physical health. ¹

**Focus on progress and search out opportunities
to stretch your existing abilities!**

We are all responsible for our own learning and growth! Many of us carry around the belief of natural talent and fixed beliefs of things they can and cannot do. According to researcher Carol Dweck, the attitude and belief that you can't learn something is part of a mindset, and it's something that we can change. An individual that has a growth mindset believes that challenges are learning opportunities, and that failure is an opportunity for growth. Dweck's research demonstrates that growth mindset also boosts resilience, positive emotions, and someone's ability to bounce back quickly from the agony of defeat.

Source [1]

www.researchgate.net/publication/253807608_The_Impact_of_Lifelong_Learning_on_Happiness_and_Well-being [2]<https://ccsuconed.wordpress.com/2017/01/23/the-top-7-benefits-of-learning-a-new-skill/>

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Create a continuous learning environment that promotes ongoing, collaborative learning. Personal Development increases confidence, competency and productivity. Continued development shouldn't be a long and arduous process. Take some time to consciously think about where you are, where you want to be, and then actively seeking opportunities to help you to get there!

“Personal development is the belief that you are worth the effort, time and energy needed to develop yourself.”

—Denis Waitley

Examples: Strategies for the aging population

Host Lunch and Learns

Choose a day of the week or month to gather for a community-wide Lunch and Learn. Allow individuals to suggest topics they're interested in and bring in a community speaker to speak on a topic of interest. You can also provide opportunities for peers to teach each other. In addition, provide a healthy lunch, set up a potluck or have individuals bring their own lunch!

Start a Community Library

Setup a bookshelf in your building and ask everyone to lend books to the library. Create a sign-up sheet so people can check-in and check-out books.

Exercise the Mind

Provide crossword puzzles or engage in other activities such as brain teasers and jigsaw puzzles that actively stimulate the mind.

Establish a personal development book club within your organization.

Challenge individuals to learn a new skill and share it!

You're never too old to learn something new. As examples, consider learning how to:

- Sing or play a musical instrument
- Speak a foreign language
- Use computers more effectively
- Take professional-quality photos
- Write great stories
- Cook exotic meals

ADOPT A GROWTH MINDSET

According to Carol Dweck and her team at Stanford University researcher, people essentially adhere to one of two mindsets—a growth or a fixed mindset. People with a fixed mindset believe that their basic qualities, such as their intelligence and talents, are fixed traits. Instead of developing their intelligence and talents, they spend their time hoping their traits will lead to success. They don't seek to develop themselves, because they think that talent alone leads to success. They turn out to be wrong—brain science has proved otherwise. People with a growth mindset believe that they can improve their intelligence and talents with effort. By applying themselves, they think that they can get better. They see brains and talent as just the starting point, and build on them with hard work and determination. Brain scans have actually revealed that effort does lead to growth in intelligence and enhancement of initial talent over time. People with this mindset have a love of learning and demonstrate greater resilience. Success at work depends on having a growth mindset.

Use the following four steps to develop a growth mindset, based on research by Dweck:

Listen to the voice of a fixed mindset in your head. This is about being mindful of your own thoughts when faced with a challenge. Notice if the thoughts are telling you that you don't have the talent, the intelligence or if you find yourself reacting with anxiety or anger when someone offers feedback to you.

Notice that you have a choice. You can accept those fixed mindset thoughts or question them. Take a few moments to practice a mindful pause.

Question the fixed mindset attitudes. When your fixed mindset says "What if I fail? I'll be a failure," you can ask yourself "Is that true? Most successful people fail. That's how they learn." Or if fixed mindset says "What if I can't do this project? I don't have the skills," reply with "Can I be absolutely sure I don't have the skills? In truth, I can only know if I try. And if I don't have the skills, doing this will help me to learn them."

Take action on the growth mindset. This will make you enjoy the challenges in the workplace, seeing them as opportunity to grow rather than avoid. Use the above system if you mind starts leaning towards the fixed mindset.

- Shamash Alidina, *Mindfulness for Dummies*

Statements that Transform your Mindset!

Accept opportunities that are out of your comfort zone · Mistakes are an important part of the process
 Skills are built, not born. They're yours if you work for them · Choose learning well over learning fast
 Actively seek out new things · Appreciate obstacles - growth comes from struggle
 The more you do, the more you learn · Just because you haven't seen change, doesn't mean you won't

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YELLOW ZONE

Less than
5 percent
of adults participate
in 30 minutes of
physical activity
each day. ³

1 in 3 adults
receive the
recommended
amount of physical
activity each week. ³

Walking for
1 hour
reduces the risk of
major depression by
26 percent. ³

HEALTH FOR ALL.

A Place Where You Can Flourish.

play

Engage in play each and every day. Research has proven that play is actually a core need for overall well-being. Play contributes to flourishing by optimizing healthy brain development and managing stress. You are likely already familiar with the numerous health benefits related to physical activity, such as a lower risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and stroke. But did you know physical activity improves mental health by reducing anxiety, depression, and negative mood and by improving self-esteem and cognitive function?

In fact, scientific studies continue to show that play and fun activities—for aging adults or people of any age—can have several major benefits. For example, play has the power to help:

- Improve how your brain works
- Heal, establish, or maintain relationships
- Improve your mental and emotional well-being
- Extend your life and improve your physical vitality ²

Play isn't only for children! Playing with children adds value for adult caregivers as well, as they can re-experience the joy of their own childhood. Play can also result in decreases in parental experiences of stress and enhancement in the caregiver-child relationship.



play

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regardless of size, resources, setting, and type - any location can provide opportunities to promote physical activity. Your environment likely already has an existing physical activity capabilities waiting to be utilized. Think sidewalks, hallways, stairwells! Additionally, being active during the day should not have to interfere with your daily tasks, work up a sweat or only be done during structured times. Use the simple ideas below to get started!

Examples: Strategies for the aging population

Walk and Talk

Individuals are likely sitting a majority of the day, so why not walk as you catch up with a friend? Take a few laps in the hallway or outside together when it is possible. Research has suggested that walking makes people more creative, too!

Host Healthy Learning Sessions

Start learning sessions or classes off right - stretch up to the sky, march in place. Get the blood flowing for a more productive session. If sessions are longer than an hour, take a 2 minute stretch break.

Map it Out

Print out maps of your building, inside or outside. Map out indoor hallways and outdoor walking trails accessible to individuals of all abilities. You can even measure the distance in halls and around the building to help individuals set walking goals for themselves.

Post a note near the elevator reminding people to take the stairs instead.

Start a Walking Challenge

Simply set a time line - 6 weeks, 10 weeks, etc. Have individuals log their steps each week. There are two categories of winners at the end of the challenge: those who have walked the most steps and those who have most improved over the course of the challenge.

There's An App for That!

Mindful Movement - Chair Stretches - changetochill.org/chill-breaks

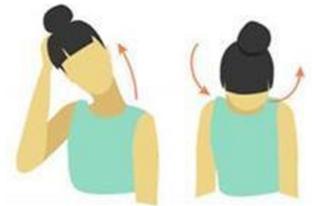
Change to Chill is an online resource that has a variety of 2 minute Mindful Movement Videos. Use these videos to walk you through beneficial chair stretches that can be utilized through out the day!

CHAIR STRETCHES



ABCs or Point and Flex. While seated, keep your ankles moving by spelling words, writing your ABCs or pointing and flexing your toes!

Neck Rolls. Start with your head at neutral and tip your head to the right or left before circling backward and then returning to neutral. This dynamic movement relaxes and stretches your neck muscles and your cervical spine!



Wrist and Forearm Stretch. Standing up, place both your hands on your desk with your fingertips pointing toward your body and your palms down. Your elbow pits should be pointed away from you.



Spinal Twist. With your hips square in front of you, twist your torso to the left and right looking over your shoulder. You can grab onto your chair for some added pressure.



Cat/Cow. Throw it back to yoga class! Place your palms face down on the table in front of you. Take a deep breath in as you pull your shoulders down and back, pressing your chest forward between your shoulders. As you breathe out, roll your shoulders forward and round through your upper back.

Standing or Seated Forward Fold. This one can be done sitting in your chair or from a standing position. With your feet planted on the floor, bend forward as far as you can, reaching for your toes.



Seated Figure 4. Cross your right leg over your left quad and place your ankle just above your knee. Keep your back flat and your shoulders strong as you lean forward, bringing your chest as close to your legs as possible. Come up to neutral and switch sides.

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30 minutes
minutes of meditation
a day not only
reduces the sense of
loneliness, reduces the
risk of heart disease,
depression, and
premature death. ²

Studies show that
30 to 40
percent
of dementia
caregivers suffer from
depression and
emotional stress. ³

Meditation can reduce
the risk of being
hospitalized for
coronary disease by
87 percent ⁴

HEALTH FOR ALL.

A Place Where You Can Flourish.

spiritual

Take a minute to embrace spirituality each and every day. Research has proven that spirituality is actually a core need for overall well-being. We've all had the experience of feeling scattered, and perhaps a bit overwhelmed. In this on demand world, it is important to be equipped with ways to relieve stress. Spirituality can be practiced in a variety of ways, such as meditation and mindfulness. Meditation and mindfulness reduces rumination of stress, boosts working memory and focus, lessens emotional reactivity and boosts cognitive flexibility, creates greater relationship satisfaction, increases happiness and boosts the immune system. ¹

Emotions can transfer, so check your mood and be intentional! What do we want to pass along to others?

It is important to express your feelings. Expressing what is on your mind will help you to maintain a focused mind. After a long day or a significant event, you may feel confused and not be able to make sense of your feelings. By writing down your thoughts, you may be able to think clearer and move forward. Also, looking for deeper meanings in your life and analyzing occurring patterns will help you see that you have control over your destiny. Being aware of this can help you achieve a happy and healthy life.

Source [1]

www.researchgate.net/publication/253807608_The_Impact_of_Lifelong_Learning_on_Happiness_and_Well-being [2] www.liveanddare.com/benefits-of-meditation

[3] www.caregiver.org/caregiver-health [4] www.disturbmenot.co/meditation-statistics

spiritual

POSITIVE THOUGHTS & AFFIRMATIONS

Individuals who have negative experiences or trauma often possess the belief that they are unworthy, damaged, or worse. These negative thought patterns build the belief system that is carried on through adulthood. It is important to help build our self-esteem and positive belief system. Giving each other positive affirmations daily will help others internalize positive beliefs about themselves, which will boost their confidence and help them to possess a healthy self-esteem.

Example Positive Thoughts & Affirmations

I am worthy · I believe in myself and my abilities · I have many talents · I matter
My family, friends and teachers love me for who I am · Every day I get better
I am deserving of love, happiness, trust and kindness · Today, I am a leader
I believe I can be whatever I want to be · Everything will be ok · Today I will be happy
All of my problems have a solution · Today is going to be a great day
I believe in my goals and dreams · I can make a difference · Every day is a fresh start

Examples: Strategies for the Workplace

Tea for the Soul

Lay out some hot water, tea bags, and some healthy treats. Google or use the apps below of inspirational quotes and write them down on strips of paper. Put all the quotes in a bowl. Invite people to take a 5-minute break to enjoy a cup of tea and snack and have everyone grab 1 quote from the bowl.

Have Posters Displaying Positive Affirmations

Post written affirmations for individuals to view. This established a positive and encouraging environment. You can even allow others to add positive notes to your affirmation board!

Inspirational Quote of the Week

Who doesn't love a great quote? Utilize an empty wall space where individuals frequently pass by. Write a new inspirational quote daily or weekly to energize everyone.

There's an App for That!

Daily Quote - Positive Quotes. A free App with inspirational and motivational quotes. Daily reminders to help you overcome adversity, persevere, achieve your goals, succeed. Start your day with a quote from our thoughtfully curated collection.

Motivation Quotes -Daily Quote. A free App that contains a set of inspirational thoughts and sayings that will urge you to take daily action or if you just need a little dose of "pick me ups" throughout the day.

MINDFUL MEDITATION

We've all been there, experiencing the feeling of scattered and perhaps a bit overwhelmed. In this on demand world, it is important to be equipped with ways to relieve stress. Mindfulness is linked to stress reduction and also improving performance and motivation. Mindfulness is linked to improved cardiovascular health, immune systems, healing time, memory, and focus.

Mindful exercises can be as short as you wish. Even one minute of consciously connecting with one of your senses can be classified as a mindful exercise. You don't need to close your eyes. You don't even need to be sitting down. Be creative about finding slots in the day to teach and practice mindfulness exercises. At times of higher stress, practicing a short mindfulness exercise can be a savior. The process helps to rebalance the nervous system, toning down the fight-or-flight response and engaging the wise part of your brain, so that individuals make reasoned decisions rather than automatically reacting to situations.

Where Do I Start? Teaching Mindfulness with the Aging Population

Start New Tasks with a Pause. Take three conscious breaths.

Savor your Morning Coffee

When you're drinking your favorite morning beverage, you'll taste it more and enjoy it better if you sip it, occasionally taking pauses to experience the full sensation of what you're doing. This little act can help to set the tone for the day: use your senses to bring you back into your body.

Take a Mindful Walk

At some point every day, take a short walk—even if it's only a few minutes—paying full attention to each step as your foot hits the ground, and the other foot lifts, swings, and lands.

Breathe

Set an alarm on your phone – even a vibrating alarm that doesn't disturb others can work well. Every time your alarm goes off, you take a mindful breath. Every time you hear the ping of a text message, you pause to be mindful of your surroundings rather than immediately reacting by checking the message. All these things are opportunities to come back into the present moment, to see yourself and your surroundings afresh.

Simply Slow Down. Check in with your body and breathe through out the day.

MINDFUL MEDITATION - continued

Research from Harvard University showed that 47 percent of a person's day can be spent lost in thoughts. The same research found that day dreaming can have a negative impact on well-being. Being on auto-pilot means that you're not fully present and awake to the opportunities and choices around you. You can't be creative, plan something new or respond appropriately if you're operating mechanically. By stopping or slowing down, you can become more efficient, productive, happy, resilient and healthy at work. As you spend time practicing mindfulness, you'll probably find yourself feeling kinder, calmer, and more patient.

Examples: Strategies for the Aging Population

Onsite Yoga Classes

Invite a yoga instructor every couple of weeks to guide individuals through a yoga class.

Hire a Masseuse for the Day

Create a sign-up sheet with 15-30 minute blocks per massage.

Make a Mental Health Lounge

Create a space for individuals to decompress, breathe, stretch, meditate, read quietly, or just relax. Include soft, comfortable seating for relaxation and a strict rule of no negative talk! Individuals are free to listen to guided meditations, play board games, etc.

Bring the Outside In

Too many buildings are filled with stuffy, recycled air that can make individuals feel sluggish. Make it a healthier place by adding plenty of oxygen-producing plants everywhere. A study conducted in 2010 determined that just one plant per work space can provide a significant lift in a person's emotional state.

There's an App for That!

What's Up? - A Mental Health App

Use this fantastic free app which utilizes some of the best CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) and ACT (Acceptance Commitment Therapy) methods to help you cope with Depression, Anxiety, Anger, Stress and more!

planning for a

YELLOW ZONE

spiritual

goal

small goals

steps to take

week one

week two

week three

week four

notes

The Mental Health Continuum – Short Form Scoring

Items 1 - 3: Emotional Well-being

Flourishing: answered "every day" or "almost every day" at least once

Languishing: answered "never" or "once or twice" at least once

Moderately mentally healthy: neither languishing nor flourishing

Items 4 - 8: Social Well-being & Items 9 - 14: Psychological Well-being

Flourishing: answered "every day" or "almost every day" at least 6 times

Languishing: answered "never" or "once or twice" at least 6 times

Moderately mentally healthy: neither languishing nor flourishing

Resources & Tools

Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) supports community-driven solutions to expand opportunities for active living, healthy eating and commercial tobacco-free living, helping all people in Minnesota prevent chronic diseases including cancer, heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes. www.health.state.mn.us/ship

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are serious and more common than you might think. In some cases, the number of Central Minnesotans who have had ACEs is higher than national averages. In Central Minnesota, several organizations are working to address the impact of ACEs. Through a collaborative effort, these organizations continue to identify the tools and resources needed to address and prevent ACEs from having devastating effects on our communities. www.feelinggoodmn.org/adverse-childhood-experiences

The Bounce Back™ Project is a unique collaborative of physicians, nurses, hospital leaders, staff and community partners in Wright County, MN, who have come together for a single purpose – to impact the lives of individuals, communities, and organizations by promoting health through happiness. The tools shared by Bounce Back™ are easy to use, can make a difference and anyone can do them! These tools include: Random Acts of Kindness, Three Good Things, Gratitude Letters, Social Connections and Self-care and Mindfulness. www.bouncebackproject.org

The Minnesota Department of Health provides learning opportunities for anyone interested in building resilience and promote mental well-being. Effective well-being strategies and practical implementation steps from communities across Minnesota help communities, families, and youth thrive. www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/topic/mentalhealth/community.cfm

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, The State of Mental Health and Aging in America, Issue Brief 1: What Do the Data Tell Us?

World Health Organization (WHO), "Mental health and older adults."
www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-of-older-adults

Dr. Corey Keyes - Promoting and Protecting Mental Health as Flourishing, A Complementary Strategy for Improving National Mental Health among children and youth

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