

Defining Medical Wellness

Definition of Terms: Dimensions of Medical Wellness

Defining Medical Wellness, Christopher Breuleux, PhD.

Before a new discipline or profession develops standards, it should have clear conceptual definitions. The Medical Wellness Association has provided critical leadership and vision to help integrate the field of medical wellness by defining appropriate medical wellness industry guidelines and professional terminology.

The changing healthcare environment requires an integrative approach to health and medical care. Increasing medical costs threaten the economic vitality of healthcare options and limit the choices for both providers and patients. Many individual consumers and groups are seeking optimal health and wellness. They realize medical science can prolong their lives, however they also want to live well and strive to be healthy throughout their entire lives.

According to the World Health Organization, health is defined as a state of optimal well-being, not merely the absence of disease and infirmity. There have been many terms used to describe wellness. These include optimal health, health promotion and total health. Optimal well-being requires the balancing of lifestyle and health related dimensions of the whole person. These dimensions of health include physical, mental, emotional, environmental, spiritual and social components. The ever-developing field of medical wellness is serving the need of helping individuals improve their health through the process of wellness practices and medical science.

"Medical Wellness" is the practice of health and medical care relating to proven wellness outcomes.

The more specific definition of medical wellness is: an approach to delivering health care that considers multiple influences on a person's health and consequently multiple modalities for treating and preventing disease as well as promoting optimal well-being.

Medical wellness integrates healthcare providers through medical and wellness practitioners working together. Whether you are a physician, therapist, allied health professional or wellness practitioner, medical wellness can provide real solutions for today's changing healthcare environment.

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Defining Optimal Well-Being

According to the World Health Organization, health is defined as: “A state of optimal well-being, not merely the absence of disease and infirmity.”

Wellness practitioners believe that optimal well-being requires a balance between wellness dimensions that comprise the whole person.

These dimensions of well-being include physical, mental, emotional, environmental, spiritual, and social components. This integrated perspective of optimal well-being recognizes the importance on each dimension as well as their gestalt. An individual’s well-being and vitality is greater than the sum of his or her parts. Although this concept has been around since Hippocrates, it seems to have been lost with the rise of conventional medicine and its reliance on specialization, technology, and separating the disease from the person.

Today, a paradigm shift is taking place as evidence-based medicine along with holistic health and complementary approaches may be integrated into a comprehensive health and wellness program.

2004, The Medical Wellness Association

What Is Medical Wellness? Christopher Breuleux, PhD.

Medical wellness is an approach for delivering health care that considers the multiple influences on a person's health. Accordingly, there are multiple options for accessing, treating and preventing disease and promoting optimal health and wellness.

Further, medical wellness:

- Provides a balanced, appropriate application of wellness practices within the clinical setting that are based on evidence-based practices.
- Promotes a cross-disciplinary approach to patient care, based on informed consent and decision support between the practitioner and patient.
- Establishes a foundation for dialogue and collaboration between conventional and complementary practices with the primary goal of promoting optimal health and well-being.
- Promotes the development and application of professional standards for wellness practices across clinical practices.

References

Breuleux, C., (2004) *Medical Wellness Journal*, The Medical Wellness Association, Volume 1-2, p.1-3.

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