



# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT National Wellness Week



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Office of Women's Health (FDA/OWH) launched National Wellness Week to inspire individuals; families; behavioral health and primary care providers; and peer-run, faith-based, and other community organizations to focus on ways to incorporate the Eight Dimensions of Wellness—mental, emotional, financial, physical, occupational, intellectual, social, and spiritual—into a person's life as part of a holistic lifestyle.

The ultimate goal of SAMHSA's National Wellness Week—celebrated the third week in September as part of National Recovery Month—is to increase awareness about wellness within our communities and to extend the longevity and quality of life of people with mental health and substance use disorders. It takes a village to support people to live well—within their bodies, minds, and communities.

## Why Is Wellness Important for People in Recovery?

We can all make healthier communities a reality. The impact of trauma, poverty, unemployment, and other preventable social conditions contributes to the development of mental health and substance use disorders. People diagnosed with serious mental illnesses and served by the public mental health system die, on average, decades earlier than the general population. Cardiovascular disease is the prime culprit,<sup>1</sup> and those with severe mental illnesses are significantly more likely to die from coronary heart disease and stroke than those without mental illnesses.<sup>2</sup> In addition, people with severe mental illnesses experience diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol, hypertension, and obesity about 1.5 to 2 times the rate of the general population.<sup>3, 4, 5</sup> Unaddressed trauma can also impact overall well-being as well.

Wellness is especially important for people who have mental health and substance use disorders because it directly relates to their quality and longevity of life. For them, wellness is more than a reduction of risk factors or the absence of disease, illness, or stress. It also involves having purpose in life,

## EIGHT DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS

1. **EMOTIONAL**—Coping effectively with life and creating satisfying relationships
2. **ENVIRONMENTAL**—Good health by occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support well-being
3. **FINANCIAL**—Satisfaction with current and future financial situations
4. **INTELLECTUAL**—Recognizing creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and skills
5. **OCCUPATIONAL**—Personal satisfaction and enrichment from work and school
6. **PHYSICAL**—Recognizing the need for physical activity, healthy foods, and sleep
7. **SOCIAL**—Developing a sense of connection, belonging, and a well-developed support system
8. **SPIRITUAL**—Expanding sense of purpose and meaning in life



satisfying work and play, joyful relationships, a healthy body and living environment, and happiness.<sup>6</sup> Each of the dimensions of wellness can affect overall quality of life, so it is important to look beyond the absence of disease to all aspects of health.

## Who Participates in National Wellness Week?

More than 3,000 national and community organizations are taking action for wellness. These organizations have taken the Pledge for Wellness, through which they commit to “promote wellness for people who have mental health and substance use disorders by taking action to improve the quality of life and reduce early mortality.”

In 2011, in honor of the first National Wellness Week, individuals and organizations promoted wellness across the country in many different ways.

- In Arizona, the **Marc Center of Mesa** hosted a series of events and activities focused on wellness, including educational workshops, a wellness fair, and a Line Dance for Wellness.
- In California, **Tulare County Health and Human Services Department of Mental Health and Sierra Hills** hosted a special wellness open house.
- In New Jersey, the **Collaborative Support Program of New Jersey** celebrated wellness with “Fall Fest 2011,” an event that featured good health information and fun with the community.
- In Pennsylvania, **Milestone Centers Inc.** hosted “Milestone Celebrates Wellness Week,” a 3-day celebration of health activities, including a mobile medical van, nutrition information, and line dancing.
- Nationally, the **National Empowerment Center, in collaboration with the National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery** and other peer-run and peer-supported national organizations, invited people to submit art, poetry, videos, and music illustrating what wellness means in their lives and for their community.

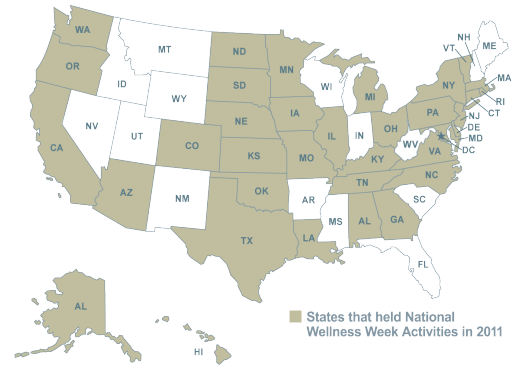
## How You Can Participate in National Wellness Week

Supporting National Wellness Week has never been easier. Visit [www.samhsa.gov/wellness](http://www.samhsa.gov/wellness), take the online **Pledge for Wellness**, and check out the interactive National Wellness Week activity map to find and participate in activities in your area. Join others in co-creating a future in which people with mental health and substance use disorders pursue optimal health, happiness, recovery, and a full and satisfying life in the community.

Email [wellness@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:wellness@samhsa.hhs.gov) to share your wellness activities and actions. We will add your updates to the map on SAMHSA’s Wellness Initiative Web site to let others know how you will be promoting wellness in your community.

### ENDNOTES

1. Parks, J., Svendsen, D., Singer, P., & Foti, M. E., (Eds.). (2006). *Morbidity and Mortality in People with Serious Mental Illness*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) Medical Directors Council.
2. (2007). Severely mentally ill have increased risk of death from cardiovascular disease. *JAMA and Archives Journals*.
3. Fagioli, A., Frank, E., Scott, J. A., Turkin, S., & Kupfer, D. J. (2005). Metabolic syndrome in bipolar disorder: Findings from the Bipolar Disorder Center for Pennsylvanians. *Bipolar Disorders*, 7(5), 424–430.
4. McEvoy, J. P., Meyer, J. M., Goff, D. C., et al. (2005). Prevalence of the metabolic syndrome in patients with schizophrenia: Baseline results from the Clinical Antipsychotic Trials of Intervention Effectiveness (CATIE) schizophrenia trial and comparison with national estimates from NHANES III. *Schizophrenia Research*, 80(1), 19–32.
5. Newcomer, J. W. (2005). Second-generation (atypical) antipsychotics and metabolic effects: A comprehensive literature review. *CNS Drugs*, 19(suppl 1), 1–93.
6. Dunn, H. L. (1961). *High-Level Wellness*. Arlington, VA: Beatty Press.



## NATIONAL WELLNESS WEEK IDEAS FOR ACTION

Looking for ideas for how you can celebrate National Wellness Week? Visit [www.samhsa.gov/wellness](http://www.samhsa.gov/wellness) to see what other organizations are doing both in and outside of your area.

## Additional Resources

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s Wellness Initiative** aims to inspire individuals to improve one physical health behavior while exploring their talents, skills, interests, social connections, and environment to incorporate other dimensions of wellness. Visit [www.samhsa.gov/wellness](http://www.samhsa.gov/wellness) for materials and to take the **Pledge for Wellness**.

FDA Office of Women’s Health  
[www.fda.gov/womens](http://www.fda.gov/womens)

Million Hearts™  
[www.millionhearts.hhs.gov](http://www.millionhearts.hhs.gov)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
[www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)

Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation  
[www.bu.edu/cpr](http://www.bu.edu/cpr)

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)  
1–800–950–NAMI (1–800–950–6264)  
[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

The National Empowerment Center  
1–800–POWER2U (1–800–769–3728)  
[www.power2u.org](http://www.power2u.org)

The National Wellness Institute  
[www.nationalwellness.org](http://www.nationalwellness.org)

healthfinder®  
[www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov)

Faces & Voices of Recovery  
[www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org](http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org)

