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Mental Wellness a Holistic Approach to Psychological Health in the Modern Era

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Abstract

Mental wellness has become a critical aspect of public health, especially in the face of increasing societal pressures, digital lifestyles, and global crises. This article explores the multifaceted nature of mental wellness, identifying key determinants, challenges, and strategies to enhance mental well-being across populations. It emphasizes prevention, early intervention, resilience, and social support as primary tools for sustainable mental health promotion.

Introduction

In the rapidly evolving landscape of the 21st century, mental wellness has emerged as a critical pillar of overall health and well-being. As societies grapple with the challenges of globalization, technological advancement, and unprecedented global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for a more comprehensive understanding of psychological health has never been greater. Traditionally, mental health has been discussed primarily in the context of mental illness; however, this limited perspective neglects the broader concept of mental wellness—a proactive, strengths-based approach to mental functioning that emphasizes emotional balance, resilience, and life satisfaction. Mental wellness encompasses more than the absence of psychological disorders; it reflects a state of positive mental functioning that enables individuals to thrive in their personal, social, and professional lives. It includes the ability to manage emotions effectively, build fulfilling relationships, cope with daily stressors, and contribute meaningfully to society. Importantly, mental wellness is shaped by a wide array of determinants—biological, psychological, social, and environmental—which interact to influence an individual's mental state throughout the lifespan.

The modern era presents both unique challenges and opportunities in the pursuit of mental wellness. Rising levels of stress, social isolation, and digital overload are contributing to increased mental health concerns globally. At the same time, growing awareness, technological innovations in care delivery, and holistic health frameworks offer new pathways for mental health promotion and prevention. This paper explores mental wellness through a holistic lens, examining its key components, global disparities, barriers to access, and integrative strategies that support mental well-being across populations [1].

Dimensions of Mental Wellness

Mental wellness is a dynamic, multidimensional concept that includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Each dimension plays a vital role in an individual's ability to manage stress, maintain relationships, and adapt to change [Figure 1].

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Figure 1: Illustration of three interrelated components of mental wellness.

Determinants of Mental Wellness

Mental wellness is influenced by a complex interplay of biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors. Genetic predispositions, brain chemistry, and physical health lay the foundation for psychological functioning. However, socio-economic conditions, access to education, employment status, and community integration play a crucial role in shaping an individual's mental landscape [2].

Social determinants of health—such as income inequality and discrimination—are consistently linked to poor mental health outcomes. Furthermore, the digital environment has reshaped human interaction, often amplifying loneliness, anxiety, and low self-worth in vulnerable groups [3].

Global Trends and Disparities

To better understand disparities in mental wellness across different economic regions, [Table 1] provides a comparison of key mental wellness indicators globally.

Indicator	High-Income Countries	Low- & Middle-Income Countries
Access to mental health care (%)	70%	20%
Average depression	5.50%	7.30%
Suicide rate (per 100,000 people)	11.1	9.3
Trained mental health	55	5

Table 1: Global Comparison of Mental Wellness Indicators

This data shows a clear gap in access to care and infrastructure, with low- and middle-income countries facing the greatest challenges in both prevention and treatment.

Challenges to Achieving Mental Wellness

Despite increasing awareness, several barriers prevent individuals from achieving optimal mental wellness. Stigma surrounding mental health continues to discourage people from seeking help. Additionally, access to professional care remains inequitable, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Economic instability, urban overcrowding, and climate anxiety further exacerbate mental health issues [4]. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the global vulnerability of mental wellness. Lockdowns, social isolation, and uncertainty significantly increased the incidence of anxiety, depression, and burnout across all age groups. Frontline workers, students, and caregivers were especially affected, revealing systemic weaknesses in mental health support.

Strategies to Promote Mental Wellness

Promoting mental wellness requires a multidisciplinary approach. Public health policies should integrate mental health into all sectors, including education, employment, and housing. Schools should implement emotional learning programs, and workplaces must foster psychologically safe environments. At the individual level, practices such as mindfulness, regular physical activity, balanced nutrition, and sufficient sleep are foundational. Cognitive-behavioral strategies, gratitude journaling, and digital detoxing have been proven to reduce stress and enhance positive emotions.

Community-based support systems—such as peer groups, helplines, and local mental health initiatives—can create an ecosystem of care and resilience. Spiritual and cultural practices also offer pathways to healing and connection.

The Role of Technology in Mental Wellness

Technology presents both challenges and opportunities for mental wellness. On one hand, excessive screen time and social media use have been linked to increased anxiety and poor sleep, particularly in adolescents [3]. On the other hand, tele therapy, mobile health apps, and AI-driven wellness tools have broadened access to mental health resources for underserved populations. Ethical considerations, including digital privacy, data security, and misinformation, must be carefully managed to ensure that technology enhances, rather than undermines, mental health.

Conclusion

Mental wellness is more than the absence of illness; it is a dynamic state of flourishing that requires intentional effort and systemic support. As mental health continues to gain global recognition, investment in preventive care, education, and equitable access will be paramount. The future of public health depends on integrating mental wellness as a core pillar of sustainable human development.

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