

## **Week Seven Topic: Equanimity and Awareness**

Equanimity is being calm, balanced, and at peace even in difficult situations.

Experiences, whether pleasant or stressful, come and go. Our bodily sensations, breath, emotions, and thoughts are also always changing. Observing, noticing, and welcoming all of these changes without judging ourselves takes practice.

Our inner resource is unchanging, a constant presence and sanctuary for us. Our inner resource helps us connect to joy, gratitude, and equanimity.

Differentiating between that which is always present and that which is always changing leads us to being awareness. Our wholeness is always present, in all experiences.

**Equanimity and awareness help us to accept people and situations as they are and not to try to push away, struggle with, or attempt to change things we cannot control.**

As helping professionals, we are taught to be 'doers' and to believe that we can only feel joy, happiness, or peace 'when' some other future condition is met, a shift is over, a problem solved, or when the work is 'done'.

Shifting from a product orientation to a process orientation helps us find equanimity. The reality is that the work never ends, so we need to prioritize joy and peace each day.

In this group, we have experienced many parts of self-care including:

- Intentions
- Inner resource
- Core values
- Heartfelt desire or mission
- Bodysensing and progressive muscle relaxation

- Breath and breathing exercises
- Emotions
- Thoughts and core beliefs
- iRest guided practices

**Each of these experiences helps us connect our bodies and our minds. This connection helps us to take care of ourselves, because we can receive and act on information about what we need.**

As helping professionals, it can be hard to overcome our socialization or conditioning. We were often taught to disconnect from our own needs and bodies as we care for others. However, in order to truly be present with and care for others, we have a responsibility to take care of ourselves.

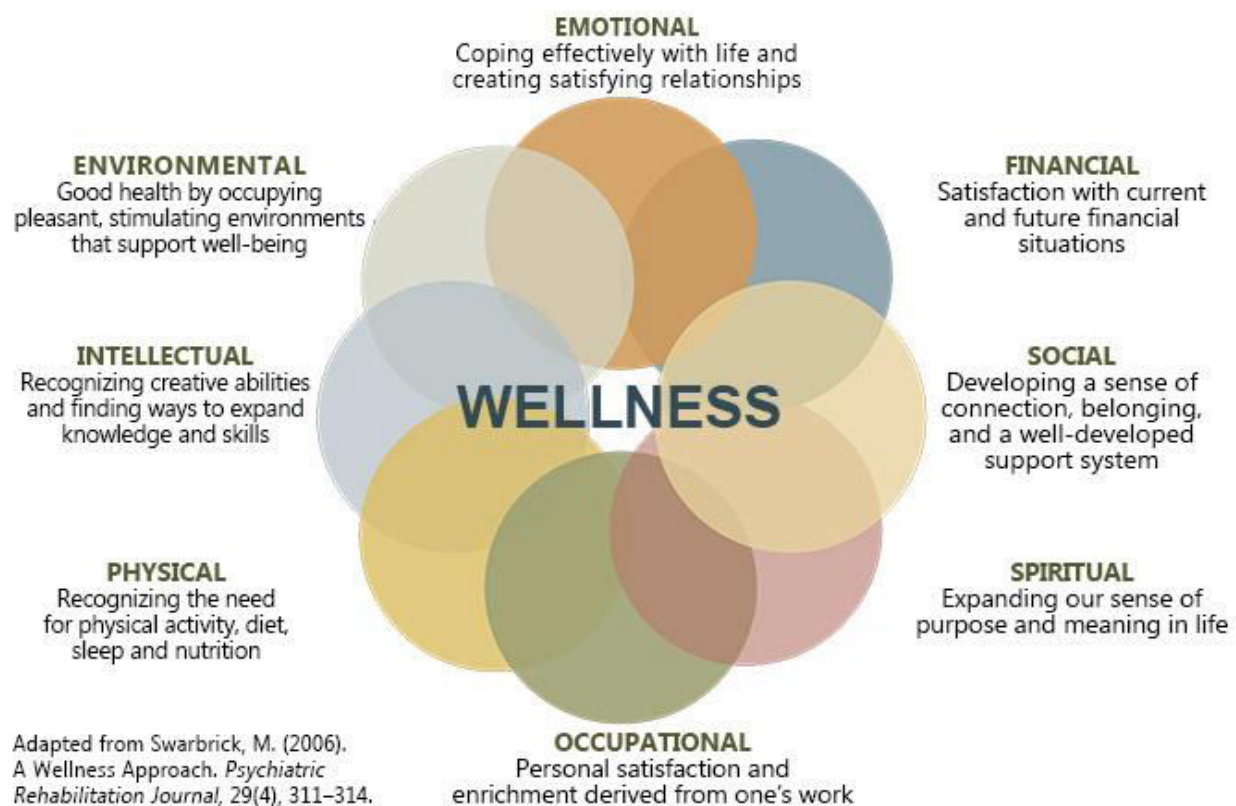
**Ann Lamont: “Lighthouses don’t go running all over an island looking for boats to save; they just stand there shining.”**

## Week Seven Homework:

Taken together, the experiences of this group help us to connect our mind to our body. By practicing relaxation techniques, mindfulness, progressive muscle relaxation, breathing exercises, and iRest guided practices, we can strengthen this mind-body connection.

This connection helps us notice and respond to messengers in the forms of feelings, emotions, and thoughts. This helps us identify our self-care needs.

SAMHSA's 8 Dimensions of Wellness is a helpful way to organize our self-assessment of our needs:



This week, take time to **notice**. Notice messengers like thirst, tiredness, or hunger. Notice thoughts, core beliefs, or emotions about your work, finances, or spiritual needs. Notice if you feel disconnected from others and need to socialize or if you need to attend to your intellect.

Choose one dimension of wellness and use it to form an intention, stated as though it is already true. For example, if you're noticing you do not get enough sleep, this could be "I care for myself by getting in bed on time each night". Act on the needs you identify each day - they change, but awareness does not.

Use the materials on the next page to begin to develop your self-care plan.

## Develop a Self-Care Plan:

Use this SAMHSA document with examples of how to self-assess each dimension and actions you can take and then note on the table below what you'd like to try in each dimension:

<https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma16-4958.pdf>

<b>Dimension:</b>	<b>Action(s):</b>	<b>When/How Often?</b>
Physical		
Intellectual		
Financial		
Environmental		
Spiritual		
Social		
Occupational		
Emotional		