

Maintaining Health & Wellness

May 2024

895.44

The North Dakota Statewide
Developmental Disabilities
Community Staff Training Program



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Suggested citation:

Schmidt, K., Rautmann, K., J. Salvesson. (2024). *Maintaining Health and Wellness*, Minot, ND: North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities, a University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities at Minot State University.

Production of this publication was supported by funding from the Developmental Disabilities Section within the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services.

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Acknowledgments:

Thanks to the DD Provider Regional Staff Trainers who reviewed the draft and provided feedback for this module, specifically JoLynn Anderson-Lacis, Melody Baker, Melissa Lima, Rebecca Andres, Ryan Orcutt, and Cherith Smith. Also, thanks to DD provider nurse Kailey Pribula for providing feedback.

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Objectives: Upon completion of this module, staff will be able to:

- Understand how disability can affect health.
- Explain how CQL personal outcomes connect to health.
- Give general tips for leading a long and healthy life.
- Explain health equity.
- Identify barriers to maintaining health and ways to overcome them.
- Explain how CQL personal outcomes connect to health.
- Explain how body systems are interrelated and interdependent.
- Identify the major systems of the body, their purpose, and healthy habits for each.
- Explain the effects of stress on the body and ways to manage stress.
- Identify ways to acknowledge and report good health changes using descriptive language.
- Identify eight dimensions of wellness.
- Explain ways staff can be good role models for health and wellness.
- Understand goals of adaptive equipment and therapies.
- Explain compassion fatigue, common signs, and ways to avoid it.

Disability and Health Overview

Health is defined in the Constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO,2021) as a state of complete physical, social, and mental well-being, and not just the absence of disease. Health is regarded by WHO as a fundamental human right. Correspondingly, all people should have access to basic resources for health. Within the context of health promotion, good health has been considered as a resource that enables people to lead socially and economically productive lives.

Health status changes over time, so achieving health and remaining healthy is an active process. Some factors that affect health are beyond a person’s control, but many are because of lifestyle choices and health practices.

Having a disability does not mean a person is not healthy or that he or she cannot be healthy. A disability that affects the body or mind can make it more difficult for a person to do certain activities and interact with the world around them. Being healthy means getting and staying well so we can lead full, active lives. That means having the tools and information to make healthy choices and knowing how to prevent illness.



For people with disabilities inclusion means having the same health promotion and prevention activities that are available to everyone. Although people with disabilities sometimes have a harder time getting and staying healthy than people without disabilities, there are things everyone can do to achieve better health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2020) offers these general tips for leading a long and healthy life:

- Be physically active every day.
- Eat nutritious foods in the recommended portions.
- Take precautions (i.e., sunscreen) when prolonged exposure to direct sunlight is expected.
- Get regular checkups (physical, dental, vision, hearing).
- Don't smoke.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, drink in moderation.
- Get help for substance abuse.
- Stay in touch with family and friends.
- If you need help, talk with your health care professional.

Health Equity

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2022), health equity is achieved when everyone has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible. Health inequities are reflected in differences in length of life, quality of life, rates of disease, disability, severity of disease, and access to treatment.

Data shows, when compared to people without disabilities, people with disabilities have less access to health care, have more depression and anxiety, engage more often in risky health behaviors such as smoking, and are less physically active (CDC, 2022).

People with disabilities such as mobility limitations, deafness and blindness or intellectual disabilities, face many challenges to accessing high-quality health care. Factors that limit access for people with disabilities include:

- Physical environment that are not accessible
- Lack of assistive technology
- Negative attitudes of people regarding disability
- Services, systems, and policies that do not mandate inclusion.



There are multiple barriers that can make it extremely difficult or even impossible for people with disabilities to be included. Often, more than one barrier occurs at a time. The seven most common barriers, identified by the CDC (2020), are listed in the table below, along with solutions to overcome each barrier:

Barrier	Solutions
<p>Attitudinal barriers often contribute to other barriers, they include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness: People may not be aware of the difficulties with transportation and access that prevent a person with a disability from being included. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness by providing education and information. • Be a good role model. • Promote inclusion as a social responsibility in which everyone can be supported to participate and lead full lives.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stereotyping: Assuming a person’s poor health is due to their disability, and that they cannot or do not want to participate. • Discrimination: believing that a person cannot or should not participate due to their inability to act as expected in society. 	
Barrier	Solutions
<p>Communication barriers are experienced by people who have disabilities that affect hearing, speaking, reading, writing, or understanding, and who use different ways to communicate than people who don’t have disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use large print on written messages or materials. • Offer materials in braille. • Offer assistive listening devices (sound-field system, Telecoils and loop systems). • Include captioning on videos • Use sign language interpreters. • Use plain language when speaking and in written communication.
Barrier	Solutions
<p>Physical barriers or obstacles that prevent people from entering or using the environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide cut-away curbs for a smooth transition from road to sidewalk. • Provide a ramp instead of or in addition to stairs. • Provide screening equipment (i.e., mammography) that allows a woman to sit). • Provide access to a scale to accommodate a person who has difficulty stepping up or who uses a wheelchair.
Barrier	Solutions
<p>Policy barriers have to do with a lack of laws and regulations, or lack of enforcement, to require programs and activities to be accessible to everyone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandate inclusion of people with disabilities, who are otherwise qualified, to participate in programs and services. • Remove physical barriers to programs and services. • Provide education to workers about inclusion and how to accommodate various disabilities. • Provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities so they can work in or participate in services or programs.
Barrier	Solutions
<p>Programmatic barriers limit the delivery of programs for people with different types of disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide convenient scheduling, keeping in mind some people use public transportation, don’t have access to a

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> computer, etc. • Provide accessible equipment. • Set aside sufficient time for medical exams and procedures. • Communicate directly with the person receiving the services. • Educate workers about the impact of attitudes, knowledge, and understanding of people with disabilities. • Provide various ways of delivering messaging, including closed captioning, braille, sign language, large font, and assistive listening systems.
Barrier	Solutions
<p>Social barriers are related to the conditions that can contribute to the overall functioning of people and the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, learn, work, and age.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote employment of people with disabilities. • Promote inclusion and accommodation within schools. • Educate others on abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and how to report incidents. • Reach out to and include people with disabilities in all aspects of life.
Barrier	Solutions
<p>Transportation barriers include lack of access to or lack of adequate resources that limit a person’s ability to be independent and access the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for accessible transportation options for people who are not able to drive. • Advocate for transportation options at convenient distances, locations, and hours of the day.

Barriers can be found anywhere. Many people who are not familiar with disabilities feel uncomfortable and are not sure how to act and what to say. Learning more about disabilities and getting to know people who have disabilities can increase the comfort level of community members and promote inclusion. By being positive role models and supporting people to be active members of their communities, staff can assist people they support to overcome stereotypes and barriers.

Personal Outcomes

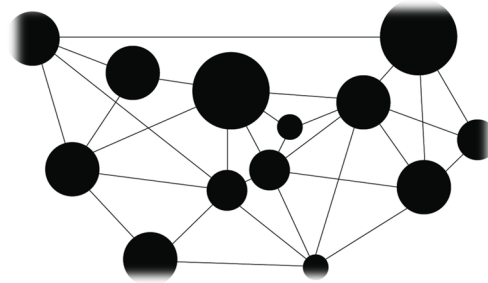
ND DD providers are required to achieve and maintain accreditation through the Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL). The areas of health and wellness are directly connected to the personal outcome measures (POM) identified by CQL. There are 21 indicators, organized under five factors, which highlight the desired outcomes of people receiving services. The chart below gives examples of some of the factors and indicators that relate to maintaining health and wellness. The chart also includes examples of desired outcomes that might be developed by people receiving services with support from the person-centered planning team.

CQL Personal Outcome Measure Factor	POM Indicator	Examples
My Human Security	People have the best possible health.	<p>Greg chooses to get screened for cancer by getting a colonoscopy at a frequency recommended by his doctor.</p> <p>Mary chooses to walk in her neighborhood every morning as part of her goal to exercise daily.</p>
My Community	People use their environments.	John goes to the YMCA in his community to lift weights and swim.
My Relationships	People decide when to share personal information.	<p>Maggie chooses to have her weight taken only during medical appointments and she does not want anyone other than her doctor and the clinic nurse to know how much she weighs.</p> <p>Bruce decided not to tell his mom that he tested positive for COVID.</p>
My Choices	People choose services	<p>Amy chooses to get her yearly flu shot at the First District Health Unit in her community.</p> <p>Lori chooses to use CVS pharmacy.</p>
My Goals	People choose personal goals	Kathy wants to lose 10 pounds this year as part of her diabetes management.

Talk to people you support about how their choices connect with living a healthy lifestyle. Making a list or a picture collage that shows current healthy habits and includes changes and activities that may lead to a healthier lifestyle, can help people to make that connection. The list or collage can include pictures and/or words. The finished piece can be hung in the person’s room, on the refrigerator door, or the bathroom mirror – a place where it can be a daily reminder of healthy choices the person is making or wants to make.

Body Systems

The body systems are interrelated and interdependent. Poor health or illness may affect one specific area of the body, or it may cause problems within the entire body. The table below outlines each body system and its purpose, as well as habits to promote good health within each body system. Since body systems are interrelated; each system depends upon the others. For example, regular exercise promotes bone and muscle health as well as breathing, circulation, and digestion.



So, if a person doesn't take care of the muscular/skeletal systems and breaks a bone (making regular exercise more difficult), this could impact the respiratory, circulatory, and gastrointestinal systems as well. As you read the health habits listed in the chart below, consider how each one may benefit more than one health system.

Body System	Healthy Habits
<p>Respiratory and Circulatory Systems: These body systems include the heart, lungs, and nose. They transfer nutrients, blood, and oxygen to cells throughout the body and remove toxins from the body.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid smoking, vaping, and other tobacco products • Avoid exposure to air pollution • Exercise regularly • Maintain a healthy weight • Get regular screenings to check blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and diabetes. • Include lean meats, fish, and healthy fats such as olive oil and avocado in your diet. • Get quality sleep • Manage stress <p>(American Lung Association, 2023; Mayo Clinic, 2023)</p>
Body System	Healthy Habits
<p>Genitourinary and Reproductive Systems: The urinary system filters the blood and stores and eliminates urine from the body. The kidneys, ureters, bladder, and urethra are included. The organs in the reproductive system are the testes for males and the ovaries for females.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the bathroom often and when needed. Urinate at least every 3 to 4 hours. • Fully empty the bladder when urinating. • Women should wipe from front to back after using the toilet. • Do pelvic floor muscle exercises. • Wear cotton underwear and loose-fitting clothes. • Drink enough fluids. • Avoid constipation. • Know the desired and side effects of medications. <p>(NIA 2022)</p>
Body System	Healthy Habits
<p>Nervous System: The brain, spinal cord, and nerves are primarily responsible for controlling and regulating all other body systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in mentally stimulating activities • Get enough sleep • Manage stress • Practice deep breathing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat a healthy, balanced diet • Exercise Daily
Body System	Healthy Habits
<p>Muscular/Skeletal Systems: The muscles, tendons, cartilage, bones, and connective tissue make up these systems. They work together to support and protect the organs. They also make movement possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do weight-bearing/strengthening and range of motion exercises • Get adequate calcium intake • Spend time outside to get natural sunlight and vitamin D • Practice ergonomics to support bone and muscle health • Maintain a healthy weight • Stretch and warm up muscles before physical activity • Maintain good posture • Eat a balanced diet that includes dairy, protein, vegetables, and fruit • Drink water to hydrate tissues and joints. <p>(Cleveland Clinic, 2021)</p>
Body System	Healthy Habits
<p>Skin and Sensory Organs: The skin is the largest organ of the body and includes the hair and nails. Skin is the protective covering for the body. Other sensory organs include the eyes, taste buds, and olfactory system (smell).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bathe in warm, not hot, water; use mild cleansers. • Avoid excessive sun exposure, use sunscreen, wear protective clothing. • Don't use tanning beds or sunlamps. • Drink water and use gentle lotions to avoid dry skin. • Reduce stress • Get enough sleep • Eat foods rich in vitamins C & E, omega-3 fatty acids, leafy greens, vegetables, and fruit to promote healthy eyes. • Minimize eye strain • Maintain good oral hygiene <p>(NIH 2015; Healthians 2022)</p>
Body System	Healthy Habits
<p>Gastrointestinal/Digestive System: This system is responsible for breaking down food so it can be used by the body. It also rids the body of solid waste. Organs include: the mouth, stomach, intestinal tract, pancreas, and liver.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables to provide fiber • Move more; exercise to maintain a healthy body weight. • Manage stress • Eat a well-balanced diet that includes all food groups. • Drink water often to stay hydrated. • Chew food thoroughly • Avoid alcohol, smoking, and vaping

Effects of Stress

Stress is a normal part of life and not all stress is bad. An event can cause both good and bad stress at the same time, such as a new job. The good stress may include learning new skills, meeting new people, or becoming more independent. The bad stress could be more responsibility, more hours of the day spent working and away from friends and family, or arranging transportation to get to and from work. Stress management involves having the ability to adjust, change, and cope in healthy ways.

When we're under a lot of stress, whether it's emotional or physical stress, our health can be affected. During a stressful event, the body releases hormones. One hormone, adrenaline, raises the heart rate and blood pressure, speeds the rate of breathing, and may cause sweating. Cortisol, another hormone that is released, increases blood sugar levels. When the stress passes, the body returns to normal. However, long-term stress can result in many health problems, including weight gain, sleep problems, digestive problems, heart disease, depression, memory impairment, headaches, and muscle tension (Mayo Clinic, 2023).

Learning how to take care of oneself physically and emotionally, and identifying what causes stress, will help to manage the impact stress has on the body. Mayo Clinic (2023) offers the following stress management tips. Encourage people you support to:

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Get regular exercise.
- Get enough sleep.
- Do relaxation exercises such as yoga, deep breathing, massage, or meditation.
- Keep a journal, write, or talk about thoughts or things to be grateful for.
- Make time for hobbies, such as reading or listening to music.
- Watch your favorite show or movie.
- Build healthy friendships and talk with friends and family.
- Have a sense of humor. Find ways to include humor and laughter in your life, such as watching funny movies or telling jokes.
- Volunteer in your community.
- Organize and focus on what you need to get done at home and work and remove tasks that aren't needed.
- Seek professional counseling if needed. A counselor can help people learn specific coping skills to manage stress.



There are many benefits to learning to manage stress, including peace of mind, less anxiety, a better quality of life, improvement in physical health, and better relationships.

Observing and Reporting

Reporting signs and symptoms of illness should be done according to your agency policy. Some health concerns will be reported in writing, other concerns require a phone call to the agency nurse or supervisor for directions, and others require emergency action by calling 911. For specific information on identifying and reporting signs and symptoms of illness, refer to the *Introduction to Health Supports* module within the Community Staff Training Program.



Recognizing healthy choices is important. While signs and symptoms of illness should be observed and reported, acknowledging changes that promote good health and wellness is equally important. Reporting good things is a way of acknowledging and celebrating the good decisions a person has made. This can be done when someone initiates a healthy behavior (“I’m going to sit outside in the fresh air tonight and visit with my roommate, instead of sitting in the living room and watching TV by myself.”) and also when a person agrees to or tolerates a healthy choice that is introduced. For example, agreeing to sit outside, or take a walk to get some fresh air. Some ways to report, acknowledge, or celebrate healthy behavior may include:

- Make a note in the logbook so that other staff see it and can acknowledge, and reinforce, the healthy behavior (i.e., “Marsha walked around the block 3 times last night!”).
- Tell the person who engaged in the healthy behavior that they should be proud of the healthy choice. Be specific, such as “Mark, today when you chose veggies instead of chips, you made a great choice! You should be proud of the way you are taking care of your body.”
- With the person’s permission, mention the healthy behavior to their family so that they can reinforce the healthy behavior too.
- Have a small celebration if the person is comfortable with that. For example, provide a DQ treat in celebration of Toni meeting her goal of journaling her frustration about work instead of worrying to the point of giving herself a headache.

Use factual and descriptive language when passing information on to others. The information you share with co-workers and others must be specific in order to be useful. The specific statements in the table below give information about what a person enjoyed so that others can promote this activity. It also lets staff who are less familiar with the person know how the person will indicate enjoyment. Does the person have a different look on their face? Is s/he moving differently to indicate excitement or joy? Is there a change in the words or sounds the person is making to indicate happiness or contentment?

General	Specific - Descriptive
John had a good day.	John smiled while we sat outside in the sun this afternoon. When asked if he liked feeling the sun on his face, he pointed to the ‘yes’ symbol in his communication book.
Teresa ate a good lunch.	There were chips and veggies on the table for lunch. Teresa chose veggies to eat with her sandwich.

Debbie seems really happy tonight.

Debbie called her mom after dinner, afterward she laughed as she told staff about their conversation. She also talked to her roommate about a movie she wants to see, which is a new step for her.

Many people with developmental disabilities are not able to tell us with words how they feel. But they can and often do tell us when something feels good or calming by a change in their behavior, body language, facial expressions, appearance, or sounds they make. Often, a direct support professional knows the person well and is able to observe the changes that indicate enjoyment and contentment.

Health Promotion

According to the World Health Organization, health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve their health (WHO, 2021).

Wellness means different things to different people. We often think of wellness as physical health, but there is much more that contributes to our overall health and well-being. The following eight dimensions of wellness can all be considered when promoting healthy lifestyle habits (NIH, 2017).



Physical Dimension

- Caring for your body to stay healthy
- Eating nutritious food
- Getting enough sleep
- Good oral hygiene (brushing teeth, seeing the dentist)
- Maintaining a healthy weight

Intellectual Dimension

- Lifelong learning

- Expanding knowledge and skills

Emotional Dimension

- Understanding and respecting the feelings and values of yourself and others
- Managing emotions in a constructive way
- Feeling good about your life

Social Dimension

- Maintaining healthy relationships
- Developing new friendships
- Being part of the community

Spiritual Dimension

- Finding purpose, value, and meaning in your life
- Participating in activities that are consistent with your beliefs and values

Vocational Dimension

- Preparing for and participating in work that provides personal satisfaction and that is consistent with your values, goals, and lifestyle
- Using your unique gifts, skills, and talents to benefit others in a way that is personally meaningful and rewarding

Financial Dimension

- Managing resources to live within your budget
- Setting goals and saving for big purchases
- Preparing for short-term and long-term needs or emergencies

Environmental Dimension

- Understanding how your environments affect your health and well-being
- Contributing to a healthy environment (i.e., recycle, don't litter)

Although some people may have health and wellness goals that are broad and may take a year or more to achieve, small lifestyle changes can make a big difference in maintaining health and wellness. A few minutes of sunshine or going for a walk can make a big difference in overall well-being, which can reinforce healthy habits. Creating a new habit can take between 30 to 60 days; encourage people you support to repeat healthy behaviors so they become habits (Health Wellness Daily, 2024).

Staff are role models to people they support. As often as possible, staff should promote healthy behavior and respect the ways people supported are trying to change or maintain wellness. Some examples of being a positive role model for health and wellness include:

- Eat healthy foods; don't bring soda and unhealthy snacks if a person you support is trying to cut back.
- Encourage physical activity even if you don't choose to do it yourself.
- Avoid using alcohol, tobacco products, and vaping products around people you support.
- Don't litter; dispose of garbage in appropriate ways (i.e., recycle or use a trash can).
- Talk about what you like about your friends or family; don't talk disrespectfully about others.
- Talk about ways that you contribute positively to your community (i.e., volunteerism, committees, recycling).
- Talk about what you are learning in the class you are taking.

What we put into our bodies, how much activity we get, and how we feel about ourselves are

important aspects for promoting health and maintaining wellness. Positive health habits can help decrease stress, lower risk of disease, and increase energy. It is helpful to make changes that are enjoyable and are more likely to be maintained.

Good quality social connections are essential to mental and physical health, and overall well-being. According to the World Health Organization and the National Institutes for Health (NIH), social isolation and loneliness are widespread and people with disabilities experience loneliness more than others. Research shows that social isolation and loneliness have a serious impact on physical and mental health, quality of life, and length of life. The effect of social isolation and loneliness on mortality is comparable to that of other well-established risk factors such as smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity (WHO, 2024; NIH, 2023). Encouraging change, or supporting health maintenance, in the following areas will assist people you support in their journey to, or maintenance of, a healthy lifestyle.

Eat Well

- Make a list before grocery shopping. Talk about the different foods on the list, whether or not they are healthy, and how they might affect each body system. For example, “You have skim milk on your grocery list, that’s a good choice to keep your heart healthy.”
- Drink more water
- Add fruits and vegetables to meals (i.e., add raisins or dates to oatmeal, or spinach to scrambled eggs).
- Eat whole grains instead of white bread.

Increase Movement

One of the great things about physical activity is that there are many ways to be active that are free. Examples include:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park further away from the door to get more steps in.
- Go for a five-minute walk. Next time go for a ten-minute walk.
- Raise your arms ten times; touch your toes ten times.
- Dance in the kitchen while making dinner.
- Plant and tend flowers or small vegetable garden.
- Rake leaves in the yard.

Connect with Others

- Be friendly
- Say hello
- Initiate conversation
- Volunteer in the community
- Do yoga with a friend
- Visit with family
- Meet friends for lunch
- Join a faith-based organization or social club
- Take an art class
- Go through family pictures and text screen shots to family members (remember when...?)



- Join a bowling league
- Volunteer to walk or pet cats or dogs at the humane society

Adaptive Equipment and Therapies

Some people may need the support of adaptive equipment and therapies to enjoy optimal health and wellness. The goals of adaptive equipment and therapies include:

- Improve mobility and functional skills (i.e., communication, independence). For example, being able to grab an item, chop a vegetable, use a spoon, write, complete a puzzle, etc.
- Improve strength and motor skill functions. Some examples of gross motor skills are cutting, climbing, dribbling a ball, skipping, crawling, etc.
- Preventing or correcting physical conditions that affect current or future health and well-being. Some common conditions are cerebral palsy, which affects a person's ability to move and maintain balance and posture. Adaptive equipment, such as a walker, can help the person to maintain mobility.
- Support opportunities for inclusion and participation. With the help of adaptive equipment, the person can maintain fun activities with peers. Examples of adaptive equipment that promote participation include bowling ball ramps, fishing aids, accessible playground equipment, switches for gaming and computer adaptations.
- Support the individual to find ways to accommodate their disability. There are many types of adaptive equipment available. A ND resource that can determine what is needed is North Dakota Assistive: <https://ndassistive.org/>
- Provide environmental aids such as wheelchair ramps and door switches to enter buildings, floor level showers to access the shower independently, large stall bathrooms, and rails beside a toilet to increase access and independence, etc.

The role of staff in providing support for specific needs include:

- Carry out therapies and the use of adaptive equipment as defined in the person's plan.
- Consult with a supervisor or program coordinator if you encounter any barriers to meeting the person's support needs for therapy or adaptive equipment.
- Document therapies and the use of adaptive equipment and orthotics as prescribed in the plan.
- If needed, request training on how to assist with adaptive equipment or carry out therapies.
- Observe changes and report them to the appropriate team member following the agency guidelines and timelines.

People may also benefit from physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy.

- **Physical therapy** seeks to develop good body alignment and to enable purposeful movement. These are often accomplished through exercises that involve stretching of specific muscle groups. In addition, orthotics (i.e., braces) and supportive pressure garments are sometimes used to promote independence.
- **Occupational therapy** focuses on teaching the person manual skills (handling and manipulating objects) and activities of daily living. Adaptive equipment (i.e., plate guards, and built-up handles on utensils and toothbrushes) are sometimes used.
- **Speech therapy** may be useful to enhance a person's ability to communicate. In situations where the person is not able to communicate with speech, alternative communication methods are taught. In addition, speech therapists are often involved in the evaluation of oral motor coordination, chewing and swallowing.



The need for evaluations by therapists can occur at any time in a person's life. A stroke, accident, or age-related disorder can require an evaluation by a therapist. Therapists typically write the procedures for providing the therapy and train direct support professionals on how to provide them. Support that is provided as part of a person's daily routine is generally the most effective.

Compassion Fatigue

As a support staff, you cannot help others be healthy and well if you are not healthy yourself. Staff who work extra shifts, don't take days off, and neglect their own self-care are at risk of developing compassion fatigue. It can lead to a loss of empathy (the ability to understand and share the feelings of others), tiredness, and being less sensitive or responsive to the needs of those you are supporting. Other common signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue include:

- Dreading work
- Feelings of irritability, anger, or anxiety
- Being oversensitive or having no sensitivity to emotional issues
- Headaches
- Trouble sleeping
- Gastrointestinal issues
- Impaired decision-making
- Poor work-life balance
- Lessened sense of career fulfillment

Tips to prevent compassion fatigue include (Good Therapy, 2020):

- **Self-Care** – This should include a balanced, nutritious diet, regular exercise, a regular schedule of sleep, balance between work and leisure activities, and caring for your own emotional needs.
- **Set Emotional Boundaries** - Be compassionate, empathetic, and support others without becoming overly involved. Remember that you are a separate person with your own needs.
- **Outside Hobbies** – When all your time is spent working or thinking about work, it can

lead to burn-out. Making time for leisure activities and personal hobbies outside of work can help lower stress and improve overall life satisfaction.

- **Build Healthy Friendships Outside of Work** – It’s great to be friends with your co-workers, but it is equally important to have healthy relationships outside of work. Connect with people who are not aware of the specific details of your work.
- **Use Positive Coping Strategies** – Avoid using alcohol or drugs to relieve stress. Consider other strategies such as deep breathing, meditating, taking a walk, talking with a friend, watching a funny movie, or relaxing in a hot bath.
- **Identify Workplace Strategies** – Talk to your supervisor about things that are or could be offered in the workplace, such as structured, open discussions among staff; regular breaks; employee assistance programs; routine check-ins; or relaxation rooms.
- **Seek Personal Therapy** – If you are feeling vulnerable or overwhelmed, consider seeing a therapist who can help you balance your home and work life. Many employers offer employee assistance programs at no or minimal cost to employees.



Additional Resources

There are many training modules in the Community Staff Training Program (CSTP) curriculum that apply directly to health and wellness, including:

Introduction to Health Supports
Friends and Fun
Medications Training
Seizures
Position, Turning, and Transferring

Diabetes Management
Working with Families
Promoting Nutrition and Wellness
Sexuality and DD
Oral Hygiene and Dental Care
Supporting Communication
Aging and DD

You can find these resources on the CSTP module website: <https://ndcpd.org/train/>



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Feedback Exercise

1. T/F Health includes only the absence of disease.
2. T/F Inclusion of people with disabilities means having the same health promotion and prevention activities that are available to everyone.
3. T/F All factors that affect health are beyond a person's control.
4. T/F Having a disability means a person is not healthy and that he or she can never be healthy.
5. T/F Creating a new habit can take between 30 to 60 days.
6. T/F The goals of adaptive equipment and therapies include preventing or correcting physical conditions that affect current or future health and well-being.
7. T/F Research shows that social isolation and loneliness have a serious impact on physical and mental health, quality of life, and length of life.
8. T/F Support staff can decide on their own to use adaptive equipment with people they support even if it's not in the person's plan.
9. _____ is achieved when everyone has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible.
10. _____ and _____ are two hormones that are released in the body during stressful events.
11. Staff who work extra shifts, don't take days off, and neglect their own self-care are at risk to develop _____.
12. What are three general tips recommended by the CDC for leading a long and healthy life?

13. Matching:

- A. Attitudinal Barrier
- B. Communication Barrier
- C. Physical Barrier
- D. Policy Barrier
- E. Programmatic Barrier
- F. Social Barrier
- G. Transportation Barrier

- _____ Prevents people from entering or using the environment.
- _____ Limits the delivery of programs for people with different types of disabilities.
- _____ Lack of accessible options for people who are not able to drive.
- _____ Conditions that can contribute to the overall functioning of people and the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, learn, work, and age.
- _____ Experienced by people who have disabilities that affect hearing, speaking, reading, writing, or understanding, and who use different ways to communicate than people who don't have disabilities.
- _____ Lack of laws and regulations, or lack of enforcement, to require programs and activities to be accessible to everyone.
- _____ Stereotyping people with disabilities; assuming their poor health is due to their disability, and that they cannot or do not want to participate.

14. There are many barriers to maintaining health for people with disabilities. For each category of barrier, give two solutions to overcome the barrier.

Attitudinal Barrier
Solutions:

Communication Barrier
Solutions:

Physical Barrier
Solutions:

Policy Barrier

Solutions:

Programmatic Barrier

Solutions:

Social Barrier

Solutions:

Transportation Barrier

Solutions:

15. What are two factors that can increase the comfort level of community members and promote inclusion of people with disabilities?

16. Give an example of an outcome a person might have that is connected to the CQL personal outcome measure “people have the best possible health”

17. Give two examples of a healthy habit that can positively affect each of the body systems listed below.

Respiratory and Circulatory System

Healthy Habits:

Genitourinary and Reproductive Systems

Healthy Habits:

Nervous System

Healthy Habits:

Muscular/Skeletal System

Healthy Habits:

Skin and Sensory Organs

Healthy Habits:

Gastrointestinal/Digestive System

Healthy Habits:

18. Give an example of how one body system can impact another body system.
19. Give three tips for stress management.
20. List two ways you could report, acknowledge, or celebrate the healthy behavior of a person you support.
21. The information you share with co-workers and others must be descriptive and specific in order to be useful. Identify which of the following statements are general (G), and which are descriptive statements (D).
- _____ Teresa ate a good lunch.
- _____ There were chips and veggies on the table for lunch. Teresa chose veggies to eat with her sandwich.
- _____ Debbie called her mom after dinner, afterward she laughed as she told staff about their conversation. She also talked to her roommate about a movie, which is a new step for her.
- _____ Debbie seems really happy tonight.
- _____ John had a good day.
- _____ John smiled while we sat outside in the sun this afternoon. When asked if he liked feeling the sun on his face, he pointed to the 'yes' symbol in his communication book.
22. Match the examples listed below with the dimension of health it corresponds to.

- A. Intellectual
- B. Emotional
- C. Social
- D. Spiritual
- E. Vocational
- F. Financial
- G. Environmental
- H. Physical

- _____ Managing resources to live within a budget.
- _____ Participating in activities that are consistent with your beliefs and values.
- _____ Participating in the city's recycling program.
- _____ Understanding and respecting feelings and values of yourself and others.
- _____ Brushing your teeth every day.
- _____ Lifelong learning
- _____ Being part of the community
- _____ Working at a job that provides personal satisfaction.

23. Give two examples of health problems that may be caused by long-term stress.
24. Give two benefits of managing stress.
25. Give two examples of how staff can be a good role model and promote healthy behavior to people they support.

Feedback Exercise Answer Key

1. T/F Health includes only the absence of disease.
2. T/F Inclusion of people with disabilities means having the same health promotion and prevention activities that are available to everyone.
3. T/F All factors that affect health are beyond a person's control.
4. T/F Having a disability means a person is not healthy and that he or she can never be healthy.
5. T/F Creating a new habit can take between 30 to 60 days.
6. T/F The goals of adaptive equipment and therapies include preventing or correcting physical conditions that affect current or future health and well-being.
7. T/F Research shows that social isolation and loneliness have a serious impact on physical and mental health, quality of life, and length of life.
8. T/F Support staff can decide on their own to use adaptive equipment with people they support even if it's not in the person's plan.

9. Health Equity is achieved when everyone has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible.

10. Adrenaline and cortisol are two hormones that are released in the body during stressful events.

11. Staff who work extra shifts, don't take days off, and neglect their own self-care are at risk to develop compassion fatigue.

12. What are three general tips recommended by the CDC for leading a long and healthy life?
 - Be physically active every day.
 - Eat nutritious foods in healthy portions.
 - Take precautions (i.e., sunscreen) when prolonged exposure to direct sunlight is expected.
 - Get regular checkups (physical, dental, vision, hearing).
 - Don't smoke.
 - If you drink alcoholic beverages, drink in moderation.
 - Get help for substance abuse.
 - Stay in touch with family and friends.
 - If you need help, talk with your health care professional.

13. Matching:

- A. Attitudinal Barrier
- B. Communication Barrier
- C. Physical Barrier
- D. Policy Barrier
- E. Programmatic Barrier
- F. Social Barrier
- G. Transportation Barrier

- C Prevents people from entering or using the environment.
- E Limits the delivery of programs for people with different types of disabilities.
- G Lack of accessible options for people who are not able to drive.
- F Conditions that can contribute to the overall functioning of people and the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, learn, work, and age.
- B Experienced by people who have disabilities that affect hearing, speaking, reading, writing, or understanding, and who use different ways to communicate than people who don't have disabilities.
- D Lack of laws and regulations, or lack of enforcement, to require programs and activities to be accessible to everyone.
- A Stereotyping people with disabilities; assuming their poor health is due to their disability, and that they cannot or do not want to participate.

14. There are many barriers to maintaining health for people with disabilities. For each category of barrier, give two solutions to overcome the barrier.

Attitudinal Barrier

Solutions:

- Raise awareness by providing education and information.
- Be a good role model.
- Think of inclusion as a social responsibility in which everyone can be supported to participate and lead full lives.

Communication Barrier

Solutions:

- Use large print on written messages or materials.
- Offer materials in Braille.
- Offer assistive listening devices (sound-field system, Telecoils and loop systems).
- Include captioning on videos
- Use sign language interpreters.
- Use plain language when speaking and in written communication.

Physical Barrier

Solutions:

- Provide cut-away curbs for a smooth transition from road to sidewalk.
- Provide a ramp instead of or in addition to stairs.
- Provide screening equipment (i.e., mammography) that allows a woman to sit).

- Provide access to a scale that accommodates a person who has difficulty stepping up or who uses a wheelchair.

Policy Barrier

Solutions:

- Include people with disabilities, who are otherwise qualified, to participate in programs and services.
- Remove physical barriers to programs and services.
- Provide education to workers about inclusion and how to accommodate various disabilities.
- Provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities so they can work in or participate in services or programs.

Programmatic Barrier

Solutions:

- Provide convenient scheduling, keeping in mind some people use public transportation, don't have access to a computer, etc.
- Provide accessible equipment.
- Set aside sufficient time for medical exams and procedures.
- Communicate directly with the person receiving the services.
- Educate workers about the impact of attitudes, knowledge, and understanding of people with disabilities.
- Provide various ways of delivering messaging, including closed captioning, braille, sign language, large font, and assistive listening systems.

Social Barrier

Solutions:

- Promote employment of people with disabilities.
- Promote inclusion and accommodation within schools.
- Educate others on what is abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and how to report.
- Reach out to and include people with disabilities in all aspects of life.

Transportation Barrier

Solutions:

- Advocate for accessible transportation options for people who are not able to drive.
- Advocate for transportation options at convenient distances, locations, and hours of the day.

15. What are two factors that can increase the comfort level of community members and promote inclusion of people with disabilities?

1. Learning more about disabilities
2. Getting to know people who have disabilities

16. Give an example of an outcome a person might have that is connected to the CQL personal outcome measure “people have the best possible health”

There are many correct answers. Two examples given in the module are:

- Greg chooses to get screened for cancer by getting a colonoscopy at a frequency recommended by his doctor.
- Mary chooses to walk in her neighborhood every morning as part of her goal to exercise daily.

17. Give two examples of a healthy habit that can positively affect each of the body systems listed below.

Respiratory and Circulatory System

Healthy Habits:

- Avoid smoking, vaping, and other tobacco products
- Avoid exposure to air pollution
- Exercise regularly
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Get regular screenings to check blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and diabetes.
- Include lean meats, fish, and healthy fats such as olive oil and avocado in your diet.
- Get quality sleep
- Manage stress

Genitourinary and Reproductive Systems

Healthy Habits:

- Use the bathroom often and when needed. Urinate at least every 3 to 4 hours.
- Fully empty the bladder when urinating.
- Women should wipe from front to back after using the toilet.
- Pelvic floor muscle exercises.
- Cotton underwear and loose-fitting clothes.
- Drink enough fluids.
- Avoid constipation.
- Know the effects of medication.

Nervous System

Healthy Habits:

- Engage in mentally stimulating activities
- Get enough sleep
- Manage stress
- Practice deep breathing
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet
- Exercise Daily

Muscular/Skeletal System

Healthy Habits:

- Weight-bearing/strengthening exercises

- Adequate calcium intake
- Spend time outside to get natural sunlight and vitamin D
- Practice ergonomics to support bone and muscle health
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Stretch and warm up muscles before physical activity
- Maintain good posture
- Eat a balanced diet that includes calcium, protein, vegetables, and fruit
- Drink plenty of water to hydrate tissues and joints.

Skin and Sensory Organs

Healthy Habits:

- Bathe in warm, not hot, water; use mild cleansers.
- Avoid sun exposure, use sunscreen, wear protective clothing.
- Don't use tanning beds or sunlamps.
- Avoid dry skin, drink water, use gentle lotions
- Reduce stress
- Get enough sleep
- Eat foods rich in vitamins C & E, omega-3 fatty acids, leafy greens, vegetables, and fruit to promote healthy eyes.
- Minimize eye strain
- Maintain good oral hygiene

Gastrointestinal/Digestive System

Healthy Habits:

- Eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables to provide fiber
- Move more; exercise to maintain a healthy body weight.
- Manage stress
- Eat all food groups in reasonable amounts.
- Drink water often
- Chew food thoroughly
- Avoid alcohol, smoking, and vaping

18. Give an example of how one body system can impact another body system.

There are many correct examples, one example given in the module is that regular exercise promotes bone and muscle health as well as breathing, circulation, and digestion. So, if a person doesn't take care of the muscular/skeletal systems and breaks a bone (making regular exercise more difficult), this could impact the respiratory, circulatory, and gastrointestinal systems as well.

19. Give three tips for stress management.

There are many correct answers. Tips given in the module include:

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Get regular exercise.

- Get enough sleep.
- Do relaxation exercises such as yoga, deep breathing, massage, or meditation.
- Keep a journal.
- Take time for hobbies
- Watch your favorite show or movie.
- Build healthy friendships and talk with friends and family.
- Have a sense of humor.
- Volunteer in your community.
- Organize and focus on what you need to get done at home and work and remove tasks that aren't needed.
- Seek professional counseling if needed.

20. List two ways you could report, acknowledge, or celebrate the healthy behavior of a person you support.

- Make a note in the logbook so that other staff see it and can acknowledge, and reinforce, the healthy behavior.
- Tell the person who engaged in the healthy behavior that they should be proud of the healthy choice they made. Be specific.
- With the person's permission, mention the healthy behavior to their family so that they can reinforce the healthy behavior too.
- Have a small celebration if the person is comfortable with that.

21. The information you share with co-workers and others must be descriptive and specific in order to be useful. Identify which of the following statements are general (G), and which are descriptive statements (D).

G Teresa ate a good lunch.

D There were chips and veggies on the table for lunch. Teresa chose veggies to eat with her sandwich.

D Debbie called her mom after dinner, afterward she laughed as she told staff about their conversation. She also talked to her roommate about a movie she wants to see, which is a new step for her.

G Debbie seems really happy tonight.

G John had a good day.

D John smiled while we sat outside in the sun this afternoon. When asked if he liked feeling the sun on his face, he pointed to the 'yes' symbol in his communication book.

22. Match the examples listed below with the dimension of health it corresponds to.

- I. Intellectual
- J. Emotional
- K. Social
- L. Spiritual

M. Vocational

N. Financial

O. Environmental

P. Physical

F Managing resources to live within a budget.

D Participating in activities that are consistent with your beliefs and values.

G Participating in the city's recycling program.

B Understanding and respecting feelings and values of yourself and others.

H Brushing your teeth every day.

A Lifelong learning

C Being part of the community

E Working at a job that provides personal satisfaction.

23. Give two examples of health problems that may be caused by long-term stress.

- Gastrointestinal issues
- sleep problems
- digestive problems
- heart disease
- depression
- memory impairment
- headaches
- muscle tension

24. Give two benefits of managing stress.

- peace of mind
- less anxiety
- better quality of life
- improvement in physical health
- better relationships

25. Give two examples of how staff can be a good role model and promote healthy behavior to people they support.

- Eat nutritious foods; don't bring soda and unhealthy snacks if a person you support is trying to cut back.
- Encourage physical activity even if you don't choose to do it yourself.
- Avoid using alcohol, tobacco products, and vaping products around people you support.
- Don't litter; dispose of garbage in appropriate ways (i.e., recycle or use a trash can).
- Talk about what you like about your friends or family; don't talk disrespectfully about others.
- Talk about ways that you contribute positively to your community (i.e., volunteerism, committees, recycling).
- Talk about what you are learning in the class you are taking.

