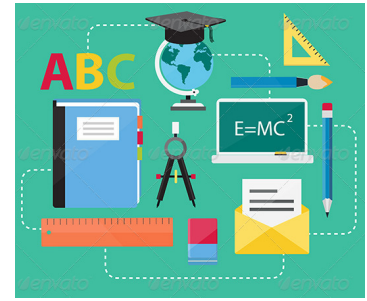


Health and Wellness

How might we increase life opportunity and equity by supporting students' health and wellness?



Why Communities Value Health and Wellness

1. **COMMUNITY HEALTH:** Community's want a say in how to define what health and wellness is.
2. **EDUCATION:** Communities want to be sure that youth understand the connections between diet, exercise and stress management with health.
3. **ACTIVITY:** Communities want youth to lead active lives, not to be stuck on electronics all the time.

Building Internal Capacity: Encouraging a Health and Wellness Mindshift

From	To
I'll take care of my health when I'm older.	I'm taking care of my health now.
I eat whatever I want.	I balance eating what tastes good with what is good for me.
I follow the health decisions of my friends.	I make my own decisions.
I enjoy being a couch potato.	I lead an active lifestyle.
I exercise when I feel like it.	I exercise on a regular schedule.
I don't know what sports or activities I like.	I have found one or two activities I love.
I define good health as not being overweight.	I define health as physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.
My relationships with friends and family don't have anything to do with my health.	My relationships with my friends and family are integral to my good health.
I'm stressed out most of the time.	I successfully manage my stress.

Knowledge & Skills Supporting the Mindshift

Adapted from James Toole, 2002

Building External Capacity: Addressing Access, Quality and Purpose

1. **ACCESS:** Do all youth have access to participate?
2. **QUALITY:** Do all youth participate in high quality programs?
3. **PURPOSE:** Do existing programs focus on the authentic needs of all youth?

ACCESS EQUITY: *What is needed for all youth to be able to have access to health and wellness?*

Issue	What Limits Life Opportunities and Equity?
Healthy Food/ Nutrition	Local stores and groceries in some neighborhoods don't carry healthy foods; fast food is substituted because inexpensive. Youth face multiple barriers accessing traditional food shelves and getting healthy options.
Affordable Exercise Options	Need easier access to sports, camps, gyms, YMCA and other key recreational activities (educate especially newly arrived parents). YMCA financial assistance scale sometimes not enough.
Places to Exercise	Limited space for physical activity in some urban setting (e.g. north side); need recreation center where welcome youth. Safety issue in housing project; Karen soccer lack space.
Early Screening	Create opportunities for early screening (i.e. 3 year olds). Preventative to catch any problems in eyesight, hearing, etc.
Code of Silence	Parents need education about issues of mental health; some conversations are still taboo. More common to not talk about physical & mental health issues. (Youth taught to respect elders. Limited open communication. Females more likely to talk than males; soccer coaches sometimes know youth well/ act as a hotline).
Organized Sports	Youth ready for and expecting more organized athletics. Not just go to park; want coaching (e.g. Hmong middle school volleyball growing fast).
Summer Activities	Need more summer options/ outlets. Also need value for stepping out. Isolation can limit future. Easy to stay in your own family and clan/ not have outside ties/ not do anything different in the summer. "Can hear a pin drop outside in summer" in some communities.
Transportation	Transportation and child care to facilitate health and wellness access. Have large families and even if have car, many other demands on it
Elder Fitness	Young concerned by lack of activity by elders, especially in winter.
Mental Health Care Access	Accessible, quality mental health services including medications with no stigma
Alternative Healing	Educate service providers and youth on alternative medicines. Find ways to cover more holistic options.
Communication	Expose kids and families to use of local resources like parks and programs available for physical activities in out of school time.

QUALITY EQUITY: *What issues might influence youth’s access to high quality health and wellness?*

Issue	What Limits Life Opportunities and Equity?
Holistic Health	Develop total youth wellness (define as physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental). All these are linked to one another and any one can interfere with youth’s life opportunities.
Stress	Need more education about how young can deal with stress. Older generation has more supports including stronger spirituality in some communities.
Technology	Ongoing concern about heavy use of electronics (cell phones, iPads) that interfere with active lifestyle. Universal problem in today’s world; how to set effective limits.
Mental Health	Educate community on how to deal with these issues including how to find and work with professionals that have cultural competence. Reframe PTSD as health issue (versus behavioral or racial issue).
Primary Doctor	Create a way for homeless youth to have a primary doctor. Difficult at free clinic because doctors rotate.
Vocabulary	Only two words for mental health in Somali—“normal” and “crazy.” Don’t have words for mood disorder, depression, etc. Means there can be heavy shaming if you are not “normal.”
Health Education	Need more education on many issues including impact of traditional immigrant diet versus American diet; how can communities deal with rates of diabetes, obesity, gout, liver and kidney disease, high blood pressure? Make connection between physical activity and wellness.
Culture and Health Care	Communities want practitioners that understand their culture. Culturally specific/ relevant programs that address the needs of youth that are Hispanic and Latino and from other groups.
Health Leadership	Whatever happens in health areas needs to include community leaders (clan or faith leaders hold central position and are listened to by many).
Health Records	Increase school-community youth advocates to solve bureaucratic problems (e.g. shots records).
Apps	Students have access to cell phones and other technologies; create a system of health education that leverages health apps . Turn technology from a distraction from family and community into a way to promote health and connection.
Health Advocates	Provide advocates to help navigate access to health care and insurance. Need to especially bridge services to youth as they transition out of a K-12 school.

PURPOSE EQUITY: *Do the purposes of youth development and leadership programs address youth's authentic needs and desires?*

Gaps	What Limits Life Opportunities and Equity?
Health Education	Talk about diet and nutrition with families and kids; affirm healthy eating; learn healthy cooking; make healthy foods as affordable as junk food so there is a real option. How to count carbs for diabetes and what they means; how to eat healthy in your own culture
Social and Emotional	Find more ways to integrate social-emotional learning in school and out of school time. Cultivate youth's awareness of their own strengths.
Mental Health	Need to address wide range of issues including bullying, self-harm, self-esteem, depression.
Cultural Vision/ Definition of Health	Need to shape our own cultural definition of wellness; not allow others to impose their definition. Definition that worked in East Africa may not work in America (e.g. "same diet as in Somalia but walked everywhere so stayed healthy")
American Lifestyle	Newer arrivals to Minnesota need to learn to cope with American lifestyle. Higher stress level, poorer diet, more sedentary, less exercise built into lifestyle.
Mosque as Wellness Center	Find ways to use the Mosque (or any faith center) to promote and provide for wellness; connect exercise and faith together. Families will listen to head person.
Mind and Body	Promising class being offered with yoga, stress relief, music, drumming, and DANCE in Somali community. U. of MN mind-body center acts as a partner; dancing is part of cultural identity and embraced by women.
Culturally Relevant Programs	Provide culturally relevant programs. Cultural attitudes can interfere with good health (e.g. plump may be considered attractive, or alcohol may be always included in social or community affairs).
Healthy Relationships	Important to promote healthy relationships in home. Trying to balance patriarchal tradition and youth dialogue and adaption to American life.
Sexual Health	Provide way to get sex education and counseling. Some populations (e.g. homeless) by their lifestyle are more vulnerable. Need way to prevent teen pregnancy (e.g. girls get other life goals, mentoring).
Substance Abuse	Need accessible and "no strings" help for youth with substance problems.
Community Garden	Create more opportunities for community gardens. Develop a community garden for youth with educational component (e.g. how to grow, store, sell and cook)
Innovation	System not working for too many youth; create support for innovation and experimentation for new ways to raise healthy youth