

Los Angeles County
Office of EducationEmployee Assistance
Service for Education

CONNECT WITH EASE

Employee Assistance Service for Education

Monthly Article

*Benefits of Getting Away
and Social Wellness*

Social Wellness Month

MESSAGE FROM EASE

July is *Social Wellness Month* and EASE would like to remind you to take some time to Connect, Relax, Renew & Recharge! Did you know that having healthy relationships could improve our overall health? It is called social wellness. Healthy relationships are a vital component of a healthy lifestyle. Having good social wellness is critical to building emotional resilience. These layers of social support and connections are also critical in times of stress and adversity. Learning to build and maintain healthy relationships is an important skill for children and adults!

In order to make sure your social well-being is healthy, it is important to nurture your relationships. They should be balanced and mutually beneficial. Are you always the one in need or are you also providing support? If you find that you are in a relationship that increases your stress levels or drains you of your energy, it may not be a healthy one. Take the time to reflect on your connections and develop your social support network. Make some new friends or strengthen the healthy relationships you currently have. Similarly, reflect on any unhealthy or toxic relationships in your life and develop some boundaries around these to mitigate their negative effect on your life. The effort you put into fostering healthy relationships have many long-term benefits for your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

Social wellness consists of balancing our own physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. For many, 2021 will be the year for a lifetime bucket list wellness trip. Studies have shown that taking time away can have physical and mental health benefits. As one looks back on life, what is remembered is moments of connection. It is in times of connection with others that one feels most present. Psychologists call it peak human experience— and creating opportunities for these moments of connections is important and good for us! I urge you to take some time to go get away somewhere to refuel yourself and to foster healthy connections this summer. Be well and be connected!

EASE CAN HELP DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

CONNECT WITH EASE:

(800) 882-1341

**Free confidential professional
help for
district employees and family
members:**

Family troubles. Emotional distress.

Job stress.

Anxiety. Drug/alcohol use. Grief.

Loss.

Life transition issues.

Professional counselors are ready
to help.

Call the EASE Hotline for 24/7
assistance.

BENEFITS OF GETTING AWAY

By: EASE STAFF

With summer here there is a need to recharge and get away, especially with the new school year just around the corner. There are so many benefits that come with taking time off. Since the start of the pandemic many have had to cancel or postpone things to maintain health and safety. As restrictions have decreased, fully vaccinated individuals are feeling more comfortable with the idea of getting away and there is more availability to travel and plan for a vacation or staycation. These moments give us a much needed reboot mentally and physically. Our everyday routines can make us live in "autopilot" mode. When we are away, it forces us to be more present and mindful because of the break in routine. Research shows that meditation and vacationing can have similar effects on the brain. When you take time off from work and home responsibilities, it takes you away from what may cause one stress. Even if you can't go on a trip, taking the time off and going to the beach or into nature reduces stress levels. When our mind is relaxed we are more able to learn, be creative and boost our cognitive functioning. Studies found that people who get away more regularly have a lower risk of cardiovascular health problems. Lack of good sleep may be a result of working long hours or constantly checking your phone/email. Taking time away disrupts that cycle which helps improve sleep even after the getaway is over. Take this as a sign to plan that much needed time off. Your mind and body will feel the healing effects of relaxation and keep you feeling refreshed long after your return.

JULY IS SOCIAL WELLNESS MONTH



Ways to Nurture and Grow Your Social Relationships

The pandemic has affected how we socialize, from being physically distant, to working remotely, and limitations with outings. Now more than ever, it is so important to nurture our social relationships and remember that relationships are a two way street. There is still uncertainty with what our "new normal" will look like so we must respect each others level of comfort with the world opening up again. Here are a few suggestions to nurture our existing relationships:

- Self-care, don't neglect your relationship with yourself.
- Make time and realistic plans that you can keep either in person, virtually or a phone call.
- Be honest and supportive of others, make an effort to reach out.
- With any relationship there are ups and downs. Take accountability for your part and avoid being critical.
- Respect their autonomy, don't try to "fix" the other person.
- Tell them and show them how much they are appreciated.
- Be fully present with one another.

Grow your social relationships:

- Join a gym or fitness class to get your body moving and meet new people.
- Join groups or clubs that share your hobbies. There are many groups that meet virtually online.
- Participate in your faith based organization activities.
- Volunteer your time to a cause that is important to you, this will not only make you feel good but you'll meet people who also share similar interests.

What is Social Wellness?

Social wellness refers to the quality of relationships you have in your life like family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, etc. It is the social support you give and receive. It is embracing your social side and maintaining the relationships that make you feel good about yourself. Healthy social support works as a protective factor for our mental and physical health. Social support assists in reducing anxiety and helps in managing stress which leads to better overall health and well-being. Studies show that having strong social support helps us live longer, boosts our self esteem, strengthens our immune system, improves cardiovascular functioning and endocrine system functioning. According to the CDC social isolation and loneliness increase the same health risks associated with cigarette smoking, obesity and physical inactivity, especially in older adults. This is why social wellness is so important. There are 3 different types of social support that contribute to Social Wellness:

- Emotional social support- which are the people that make you feel cared for and appreciated.
- Instrumental support- which are the people that provide physical aide like borrowing money, help you move or provide a ride if your car breaks down, help when you need it the most.
- Informational support which could look like receiving helpful advice, resources, suggestions or information.

<https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/lonely-older-adults.html>

<https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/manage-social-support>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/carolinecastrillon/2021/05/23/why-taking-vacation-time-could-save-your-life/?sh=7f190e7c24de>

<https://www.providence.org/news/uf/634124890>

<https://www.conehealth.com/services/behavioral-health/8-ways-to-better-social-wellness/>

TALK TO US

EASE has counselors if you want to talk.

(800) 882-1341