

# The 8 Dimensions of Wellness



Carina Nebula  
James Webb Space Telescope

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The Carina Nebula, NGC 3372, is an enormous cloud of gas and dust home to several massive and bright stars, including at least a dozen that are 50 to 100 times the mass of our Sun. It's located about 7,500 light years away from Earth and is an area of star creation and death. It has areas of light and dark, which can parallel our emotions and mood in some ways. Often times we feel uplifted, hopeful, and bright. Other times we feel sad, dark, or scared. To keep our psyche in a state of balance, we must check in with our sense of wellness.

*The 8 Dimensions of Wellness* is a model that can help to assess your overall wellness on 8 different measures. If you imagine these 8 measures acting as spokes on a wheel, it's important to make sure they're as balanced as possible for a mentally well life. From a counseling lens, wellness encompasses way more than nutritional supplements and a fitness tracker. The American Counseling Association Encyclopedia of Counseling refers to wellness as "a state of positive well-being ... in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated." When one or more of these are off balance, we feel its effects. Take a moment and read through each of the 8 dimensions.

After each dimension, rate yourself on the scale provided with how you think you're doing on that particular factor. Feel free to answer the follow-up questions and repeat this exercise weekly to monitor your progress.

# Emotional

**Understanding and respecting your feelings, values, and attitudes. Not your stressors themselves, but how you navigate through them.**

The first dimension of wellness is the *Emotional Dimension*. This aspect relates to riding life's ups and downs with what you would deem healthy. It's important to consider a baseline measure of emotional wellness for you. The baseline is the average of where you find yourself to be on any given day. The upper limits of your emotional coping would be considered doing great, awesome, you're a rockstar. The lower limits of your emotional coping would be not doing great at all, struggling to complete daily tasks, and even being concerned for your safety. The idea with any of these dimensions is to find balance.

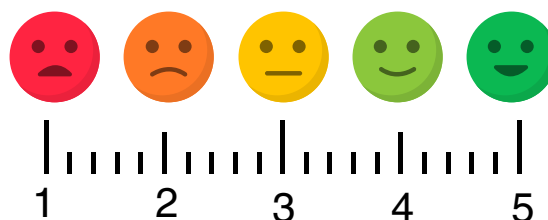
The *Emotional Dimension* also involves the ability to express feelings and adjust to life's ever-changing landscape. This can include stressors or aspects that make life enjoyable. It's also important to know your strengths and what you hope to improve on in life. As with anything, we aren't acting alone, and asking for help when needed is a sign of health. What it means is that you value yourself enough to know none of us are perfect and are worth receiving help from others.

## **Some questions to ask when considering Emotional Wellness:**

- Do you allow yourself to be open to and acknowledge your feelings without judgment?
- Have you found safe relationships with people or groups where you can express your feelings and thoughts?
- Do you know your limitations and learn from your mistakes?
- Do you have a healthy work-life balance?
- Are you managing stress in healthy ways that work for your lifestyle?

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On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being the worst and 5 being the best), where would you rate your current Emotional Wellness? (circle one)



What would it take to get from the number you circled to increase by 1 point?

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# Social

**Healthy relationships. Enjoy being around the people you're around. Letting others care about you. Contributing to your community.**

The next dimension of wellness is the *Social Dimension*. In this dimension, you're having relationships of varying degrees. The types of relationships include familial, friendship, romantic, community, and acquaintance. There's no correct amount of social relationships that any person should have, as this is dependent on many variables. However, when looking inward, the measure is based on how much fulfillment you're getting from each of these connections.

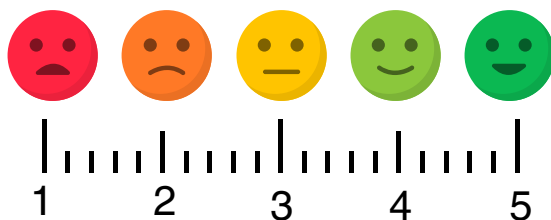
Social wellness refers to not only the relationships we have but also how we interact with others. Our relationships can offer support during difficult times. Social wellness involves building healthy, nurturing, and supportive relationships as well as fostering a genuine connection with those around you. Humans are social creatures that need connection with other humans. The degree of connection is variable from person to person and may shift throughout your life. The important part is to reflect inward and see what your unique needs are.

## Some questions to ask when considering Social Wellness:

- Have you found groups or hobbies that allow you to connect with other people?
- Have you met up with a friend for coffee, lunch, or dinner?
- Are you frequently in touch with family (blood relatives or chosen family)?
- Are you getting out to meet with new people that have similar interests?
- Are you open to meeting people from different backgrounds?
- Do you make quality time with friends and family? Or do you wait for others to come to you?
- Do you make time to go to places where you can meet new people or visit a new location?

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On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being the worst and 5 being the best), where would you rate your current Social Wellness? (circle one)



What would it take to get from the number you circled to increase by 1 point?

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# Financial

**Managing resources to live within your means. Making informed financial decisions and investments.**

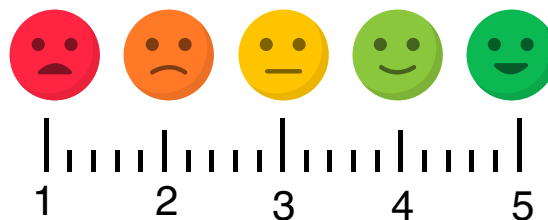
The *Financial Dimension* is the next dimension we will mention. This along with all the others have many definitions about what constitutes being well. However, financial wellness includes things such as income, debt, savings, as well as a person's understanding and resources. A person's satisfaction with their financial situation and future comes into play as well. We've probably heard of the situation where a person that wins the lottery goes bankrupt in a few years after collecting the lump sum of money. A huge chunk of financial wellness is knowing how to manage these finances well. And in the case of the bankrupt millionaire, it might be a safe assumption that their financial journey wasn't the best beforehand, which turned up the volume on their financial decisions post-lottery winnings. Sure this example is dramatic to make the point that financial wellness involves behavioral decisions along the way. This involves core values and beliefs, learned behavior from our caregivers on how to manage money, and our socioeconomic status among the cards we're dealt at birth. That's all to say there are important questions to ask yourself along the way to help gauge your financial wellness.

**Some questions to ask when considering Financial Wellness:**

- How does financial wellness impact your life?
- Does your current job allow you to meet your obligations and resources to do things you enjoy?
- Are you working in a field that you are passionate about or doing well?
- Do you check your bank account statements regularly?
- Are your savings in line with your life goals, such as taking vacations, home ownership, or retirement?
- Do you have a weekly/monthly budget?
- Have you sought professional help from a financial advisor?
- Do you have a savings account or money set aside in case of an emergency?

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On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being the worst and 5 being the best), where would you rate your current Financial Wellness? (circle one)



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# Spiritual

**Finding purpose, value, and meaning in your life. Participating in activities that align with your values and beliefs.**

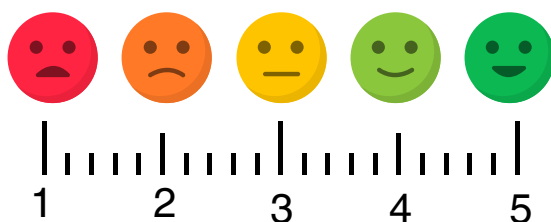
The *Spiritual Dimension* of wellness includes one's own personal values, beliefs, and morals. In a basic sense, it's a connection to something or someone greater than any one of us. This doesn't have to be religious in practice, but it can be. For many people, this can mean a connection with nature or our planet. Spirituality from a wellness perspective involves having meaning, purpose, and a sense of balance and peace. What it includes is a search for meaning and purpose in human existence, and developing an appreciation for life and the natural forces that exist in the universe. As you can see, this dimension can get existential pretty quickly. Often times when I mention spirituality with a client, it sparks a passionate response. For many, the presence or absence of spirituality can stem from your family of origin. It can bring comfort for some and discomfort to others. This is one of the reasons why spirituality is one of the eight dimensions of wellness. As we grow into our own person and beliefs throughout adolescence and adulthood. When our beliefs are challenged or reinforced, they can contribute to our overall wellness. Along your journey, it's important to consider the following questions.

## **Some questions to ask when considering Spiritual Wellness:**

- Are you taking time to connect with your values, principles, and beliefs?
- Have you learned about other beliefs and value systems?
- Is your spirituality able to connect you with other people?
- Do you take time each day to meditate or reflect on your spirituality?
- Do you lean on your beliefs during difficult times as well as positive ones?

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On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being the worst and 5 being the best), where would you rate your current Spiritual Wellness? (circle one)



What would it take to get from the number you circled to increase by 1 point?

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# Occupational

**Participating in work that provides personal satisfaction and life enrichment that is consistent with your values, goals, and lifestyles.**

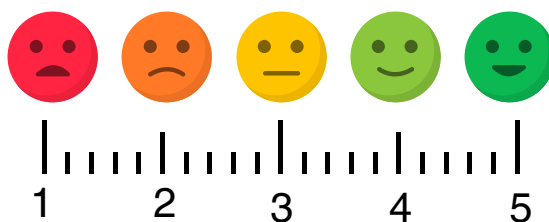
When thinking about the *Occupational* Dimensions of wellness, it's important to think beyond just a paycheck. Work can bring a paycheck, which in turn allows us to live a rich and meaningful life. But not all jobs can provide us with the sense of fulfillment we need to be full humans. This is where this dimension picks up. Occupational wellness refers to the parts of you that add a sense of purpose, curiosity, and knowledge. It might include the idea about the work you'd do for free because you enjoy it so much. If you think about your hobbies and interests, they'd fall under Occupational wellness. When we discuss fulfillment at work with fulfillment in other areas, it introduces the concept of having a healthy work-life balance. When we have a healthy work-life balance, our home life and relationships can be nurtured and grow. In addition, we feel supported by our coworkers, and friends, and are better equipped to handle stressors. This then trickles into the concept of burnout and navigating ways of preventing it.

## **Some questions to ask when considering Occupational Wellness:**

- Are you involved in a career that fits your values?
- Do you have an open line of communication with your employer/coworkers?
- Does your work offer personal satisfaction?
- Does your job encourage you to contribute and grow your talents and abilities?
- Are you in a career that you look forward to and that gives you a sense of accomplishment and pride?
- Do you schedule time for leisure?

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On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being the worst and 5 being the best), where would you rate your current Occupational Wellness? (circle one)



What would it take to get from the number you circled to increase by 1 point?

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# Physical

**Caring for your body to stay healthy now and in the future. Healthy diet, adequate exercise, and productive sleep.**

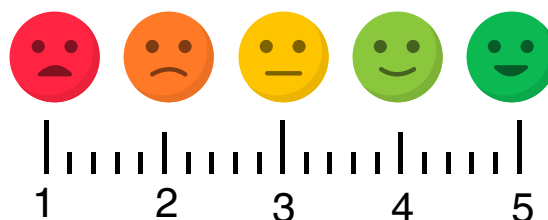
The next dimension we'll mention on this worksheet is the *Physical Dimension* of wellness. This dimension includes a healthy body and maintaining good physical health habits. Nutrition, exercise, and adequate sleep are the main areas to point out here. Getting the nutrition you need can play a vital role in your mental health. This doesn't refer to being on any diet plan specifically, but more about getting the fuel your body and brain need to function at their best. There are meal plans that include lower inflammatory foods, which help lower cortisol levels, in turn helping us better navigate stress and anxiety. But this is not a replacement for a nutritionist, and we won't get much deeper into that here. Exercise is another mood stabilizer, which has been shown to improve levels of anxiety, depression, and overall stress reduction. When exercising, it's important to engage in physical activity that you enjoy. This will help adherence to a plan, which will help physical activity be part of your routine. Finally, sleep is a big mood stabilizer and is often one of the first things to be affected when we are anxious or depressed. Too much or too little sleep can both be a factor in our mental health. It's important to get productive sleep, meaning we are able to sleep through 7-9 hours a night of sleep without waking up, ruminating prior to falling asleep or having nightmares. This topic will be discussed further in another worksheet. Our body is intelligent, and it's important that we listen to it. When we connect with our physical sense, we can listen to what it's telling us.

## **Some questions to ask when considering Physical Wellness:**

- Are you getting adequate nutrition for your lifestyle?
- Are you getting regular physical activity that you enjoy?
- Are you getting productive sleep?

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On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being the worst and 5 being the best), where would you rate your current Physical Wellness? (circle one)



What would it take to get from the number you circled to increase by 1 point?

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# Intellectual

**Growing intellectually, maintaining curiosity about all there is to learn. Positive response to change. Expanding knowledge and potential.**

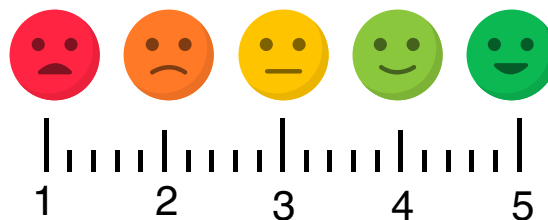
The *Intellectual Dimension* of wellness includes things that help keep our brain active and intellectually expanding. This can mean anything including book knowledge, awareness of new cultures, social practices, local and global events, current affairs, etc. This dimension involves looking at various perspectives of an issue and taking them into consideration. This can be especially relevant to political, racial, social, and religious topics. As an extension of simply knowing the information, it's important that relate to others. As we become more aware of our own perspectives, we can start to understand diverse points of view. This adds to us being well-rounded humans, capable of advanced thought and practice.

**Some questions that can relate to the Intellectual Dimension of wellness include:**

- Have you considered teaching a class or leading a workshop based on the skills, knowledge, or experience you have?
- Do you enjoy reading?
- What would you like to do or learn?
- Have you considered creative arts such as drawing, pottery, or photography?
- Are you interested in continuing education, and are there available classes near you that might find interesting?
- Have you explored new places that interest you?
- Have you read up on current affairs on a local, national, and international level?
- Do you enjoy taking part in discussions, intellectual conversations, debates, or other ways of gaining an enhanced understanding of issues?

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On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being the worst and 5 being the best), where would you rate your current Intellectual Wellness? (circle one)



What would it take to get from the number you circled to increase by 1 point?

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# Environmental

**Understanding how your social, natural, and built environments affect your well-being. Showing gratitude and being kind to Earth.**

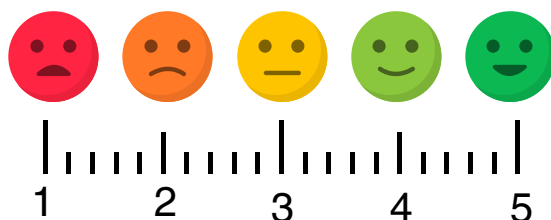
The final dimension we'll mention is the *Environmental Dimension*. This aspect of wellness includes being able to feel safe and be safe. This can include things such as having access to clean air, food, and water, preserving the areas where we live, being surrounded by areas that are pleasant, promote learning and relaxation. We've probably all been in areas that feel uncomfortable. This discomfort can very much play into our mental health and performance. Many people see their home as a place that should convey security and safety. When home isn't comfortable, we feel stressed. Similarly, a workplace can act in this way. Explain this concept further to a global level. When we see a planet that is littered, polluted, or destroyed, we might feel a sense of hopelessness. By the opposite token, when we find ourselves in spaces that are thriving, healing, and treated with respect, our mental health improves. When considering this dimension of wellness in your life, consider the green spaces you have access to, whether you find your neighborhood to be calming or stressful, and so on.

**Some questions that can relate to the Environmental Dimension of wellness include:**

- Do you feel safe at home and at work (this includes physically and emotionally)?
- Are you limiting the power and water you use at home?
- Are you spending recreational time outdoors?
- Do you live in a space that is clean and free of clutter?
- Is your living space filled with a style you enjoy?
- Do you pick up litter when you see it?
- Do you take time to regularly appreciate our planet Earth?

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On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being the worst and 5 being the best), where would you rate your current Environmental Wellness? (circle one)



What would it take to get from the number you circled to increase by 1 point?

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The 8 Dimensions of Wellness stems from a model created by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Wellness Initiative. Every person's wellness path is different, so the original version has been modified to be current. It's important to remember that there is no right or wrong measure with each of these dimensions. Cultural background, socioeconomic status, family background, and life experience should be considered. The goal of this worksheet is to help figure out areas that need a little more attention and which areas are strengths. By checking in with yourself, you can start to decrease anxiety, and depression, and improve overall mental wellness.



*Next Steps: Repeat this worksheet once a week. Check the progress from week to week and notice what's changed. If things are improving, awesome! Keep doing what you're doing. And if things aren't improving how you'd like, feel free to revisit what you might need to do differently. Remember that this isn't a race to the finish line. Be kind to yourself and with your own pace. Please note this isn't a substitute for mental health counseling with a professional but can be a great additional tool.*

*Ad Astra,  
Sharife*

*Disclaimer: The resources available on The Space Therapist do not replace therapy. Professionals who use the tools available on this website should not practice outside their own areas of competency. These tools are intended to supplement treatment and are not a replacement for appropriate training. They are also intended to be a springboard for future self-exploration.*