The background of the entire page is a vibrant sunset over a body of water. The sky transitions from a deep purple at the top to a bright orange near the horizon. The sun is a glowing orb on the right side, just above the water's surface. On the left, a large, dark silhouette of a tree with many branches dominates the foreground. In the lower right, a person's silhouette stands with their arms outstretched horizontally, facing the sunset. The overall mood is peaceful and expansive.

Holistic Development Of The **Whole Person**

By The American Institute of Health Care Professionals, Inc.

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Introduction

Achieving your full potential and becoming a whole person requires wellness in all aspects of your life. If parts of your life are unhealthy, you cannot be truly whole. To achieve this wholeness, you must make conscious,

self-directed choices and engage in an evolving process that will lead you to your whole self.



Being whole is not only multi-dimensional, encompassing all aspects of your lifestyle, but it is also a holistic approach to living that places priority on all the aspects you need to be a healthy person, not just a few.

Wellness In All Aspects to Become a Whole Person

Becoming a whole person and ascribing wellness to all aspects of your life is not only affirming but also a positive way to approach life. When you are whole and well, you actively make choices toward and are aware of all aspects of your existence, including how to continue to grow.

Being a healthy, whole person is not just about your physical health and well-being. There are seven dimensions that comprise the whole person, and it is only when all of these are in balance with one another that you are whole and truly well.

When one dimension is lacking or unhealthy, it affects all the others, and you begin to compensate in other areas of your life, making you unbalanced.



To create a whole life that is stable and fulfilling, then, you must pay attention to all seven of these dimensions.

These seven essential aspects of life that lead to wellness and becoming a whole person are the physical, spiritual, emotional, environmental, intellectual, social, and occupational dimensions. Below, we describe each of these in further detail.

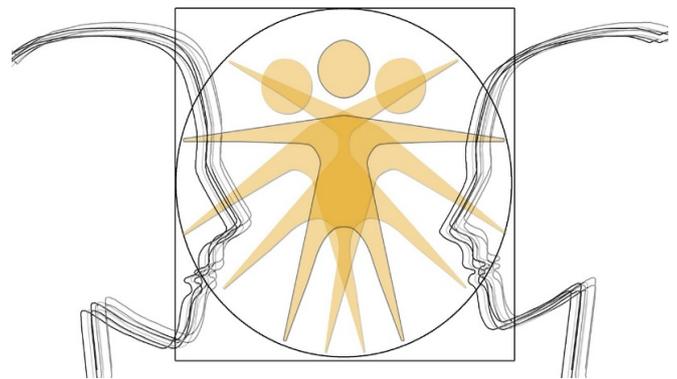
The Dimensions of Wellness

Physical

Your physical body allows you to participate fully in your life and all the things you wish to accomplish. When your body is not functioning well, you may experience fatigue, pain, or other symptoms that tell you your body isn't getting everything it needs.

Those seeking wellness will include a focus on proper nutrition, regular exercise, personal hygiene, sleep habits, and saying no to unhealthy habits.

When you can recognize and control your behaviors that impact your physical health, you can control your weight, your ability to engage in healthy habits, and your ability to say "no" to unhealthy habits.



This will lead to your optimal physical wellness, contributing to your journey toward wholeness. Instead of focusing just on your diet or exercise routine, physical wellness is really more about creating a life that supports healthy body functions and will allow you to live a long life.

Spiritual

Your spiritual dimension relates directly to how you find meaning or purpose in life as well as what guides you on your journey toward wholeness. The spiritual dimension focuses on your values and how your actions reflect these. We are each guided by our own spirituality, and while this may come from religion, that is not necessary to have spiritual balance. The most important aspect of this dimension is identifying for yourself your values and beliefs, then choosing a path in life that allows you to live by these in always.

Emotional

The emotional dimension of your life is not just about your feelings but also your emotional presence and how comfortable you are with your emotions. It is also connected to how well you can express your feelings and thoughts as well as related to those of others.

Your emotional wellness includes how well you cope with the challenges of life as well as how productively you can share your strong emotions with others. Coping with stress, having a sense of mental balance, and your own journey to personal discovery all contribute to your emotional dimension.

Environmental

Your environmental dimension includes how your environment influences you as well as your own personal impact on the environment. Your living and working space should be safe and make you feel comfortable, and your surroundings should support all aspects of your life. In addition,

your environmental wellness includes your care for the environment, both in your personal space and in the world at large. Respecting and conserving natural resources, connecting with nature, preserving lands for future generations, and caring for your space and the environment are all important aspects of your environmental wellness.

Intellectual

Just as you want your body to be healthy, so should you want to stimulate and exercise your brain. Intellectual wellness involves developing your mind in new ways, continuing to learn, being creative, and solving problems. It also includes your openness to new ideas and experiences, improving on your weak skills, and embracing a stance of perpetual growth and learning.

In addition to learning opportunities, those with intellectual wellness embrace cultural experiences, are open to new ways of understanding the world, and discovering new hobbies in order to explore and discover more about their world.

Social

The social dimension of wellness encompasses most of your interactions with other people. From being comfortable enough with yourself to engaging with others in healthy ways, social wellness is a significant part of being a whole person. Connecting with others helps you establish relationships, work well with colleagues, and find the emotional support you need to live a healthy, fulfilling life.

Forming intimate relationships that are based on mutual respect as well as supportive boundaries are also an important component. Social wellness allows you to be successful in so many other aspects of your life because you are nurtured and loved by others.

Occupational

Finding a balance with the work you do every day is an important component to overall wellness. We engage in work for a significant portion of our daily existence, and if you are not personally fulfilled by what you do, it can make feel balanced and whole difficult. Occupational wellness means your work brings you satisfaction, and that you are able to balance it with the other parts of your life that are equally important.

Your occupational wellness focuses on finding your purpose in life, setting goals toward which you work, and learning to cope with the pressures and stresses of your job.

What It Means To Be Whole

Being a whole person means that all of your wellness dimensions are balanced and contribute to each of the others. When your dimensions are well-rounded and healthy, they help you manage the craziness and unexpectedness of life. And when one or more of your dimensions is out of sync, you are no longer living a whole life but instead living to compensate for those areas that are in jeopardy.

Being a whole, well person means your mind, body, spirit, and soul are working together to bring you happiness and help you find your true joy and passion in life. Being a whole person means a full integration of all dimensions of your person, so that each component can successfully support the others in reaching their potential.

While some may look at the seven dimensions and see discrete, compartmentalized functions, this is not the case at all. It is that kind of thinking that can lead to imbalance and feeling less than whole. When you are focusing on one aspect of your life because it is unhealthy, you make sacrifices in other dimensions of your life, and you lose peace, joy, love, and freedom. But, when other aspects of your life are full and in balance, it actually becomes easier to pay special attention to one dimension that may need more focus and care, because you have the support system necessary to do the important work.

As an example, let's consider that your occupational dimension is being tested by a new project, as you are spending many hours learning something new and focusing on accomplishing a new professional goal. This may mean, though, that you are less focused on maintaining your social relationships or attending to your physical well-being. While your intellectual dimension is healthy, your spiritual and environmental dimensions are taking a hit.

Instead of tallying up each day how each part of your life is doing, though, consider a holistic look at this situation.

Are you feeling joy about your work, regardless of the stress and effort you are expending?

Are you content with this temporary unsettledness, or does it bring you stress?

Are your social relationships supportive of this challenge, or do you find yourself feeling isolated?

What have you learned about yourself from this trying time, and how could you apply this to all aspects of your life?

By looking holistically at all of these aspects, which make you a whole person, you can better determine where adjustments need to be made, what parts of your life are helpful and supportive and what parts need attention, and where you are feeling the most vulnerable. It's this intentional focus on all parts of your life, not just a few, that makes you a whole person that is well and healthy.

The Benefits of Living as a Whole Person

Finding overall wellness means discovering all the aspects of your whole self, which places you in the position to be in charge of your life and thrive in all aspects. By finding wellness across all dimensions, you can achieve a balance and harmony between your soul, spirit, mind, and body.

When you become a whole person, you experience less stress. You are able to cope with the challenges of life, and you recognize that feeling stressed is a sign of imbalance in one or more of your dimensions. Returning to your intentional study of all aspects of your life will help you relieve that stress and find the peace you desire.

Being a whole person allows you to enjoy improved health and well-being. Not only will your body be healthier and able to do more and withstand more, but you will have an arsenal of healthy habits to fall back on when things become difficult or life tests you in new ways.

Becoming a whole person provides you with personal esteem, a healthier outlook on life, and a sense of purpose that leads to better mental health.



Wellness across all dimensions leads to less depression and anxiety and improved abilities to overcome mental challenges that throw us off balance now and then.

When you have wellness in all dimensions, you'll experience more energy. When you have healthy habits that include diet, exercise, sleep, and stress reduction, you'll notice less fatigue and more pep to your step, overall.

Staying social, keeping your mind active, and connecting with a purpose all improve your mood and mental state, as well. All dimensions are responsible for being a whole person, as they all contribute to happiness and joy in life.

In addition to all of these, becoming a whole, well person means you live your life in freedom. By embracing the multi-dimensional aspects of your wellness and finding balance with them all, you are able to avoid struggle, negative thinking, and emotional turmoil that plague so many in our world today. You become free from feeling stuck and free to enjoy the life you truly want to live. Finding balance and becoming a whole person can help you find all of these, and so much more.

Wellness Assessment Tool

Now that you understand the various dimensions of wellness and becoming a whole person, you can determine in which areas you are strong and where you need to grow. There are many different self-assessment tools available online, including helpful checklists to help you identify specific behaviors in each dimension.

The following suggested questionnaire is not a diagnostic tool but merely a helpful guide to your own self-assessment efforts. It is best used for self-reflection and to guide goal setting.

How To

For each of the dimensions, carefully read each statement. Determine the frequency with which you engage in each behavior, with "1" being Never and "4" being Always. Write down your score for each statement, the tally up the totals for each of the seven dimensions listed.

Physical

1. I regularly engage in physical exercise, i.e., 30 minutes at least 5 times a week, or 10,000 steps a day.
2. I get 6-8 hours of quality sleep each night.
3. I engage in behaviors that protect me and others from getting sick, including washing my hands, covering my cough, etc.
4. I don't drink alcohol or, if I do, I drink no more than one drink per day.
5. I avoid using recreational drugs or tobacco products.
6. I eat a balanced diet that is based on whole foods like fruits, vegetables, healthy fats, and whole grains.
7. I get a regular physical exam to monitor my health.

Spiritual

1. I regularly think about what is important in life. Who am I? What do I value? Where do I fit in? What are my goals?
2. I find balance between serving my own needs and those of others.
3. I engage in acts of goodwill and caring without expecting anything in return.
4. I sympathize or empathize with those who are suffering. I try to help them through difficult times.
5. My values guide my life's priorities as well as my actions.
6. I feel connected to something larger than myself, which could include a supreme being, nature, the connectedness of all living things, humanity, or a community.
7. I feel like my life has purpose and meaning.

Emotional

1. I easily express my emotions in constructive, positive ways.
2. I know when I am stressed. I have a stress management plan.
3. I am resilient. I bounce back easily after experiencing disappointment or problems.
4. I maintain a balance with work, family, friends and other obligations.
5. I am flexible. I can adapt or adjust to change in a positive way.
6. I am able to make decisions without undue stress or worry.
7. I am able to express my anger in non-confrontational or non-hurtful ways

Environmental

1. I recognize how my actions impact my environment.
2. I take time to appreciate my surroundings.
3. I am aware of health and wellness resources available to me.
4. I engage in environmentally-conscious behaviors.
5. I contribute towards making the environment of our planet safer and healthier.
6. I surround myself with people who support me.
7. I feel safe in my living environment.

Intellectual

1. I am curious and interested in the world around me.
2. I search for learning opportunities that stimulate my mental activities.
3. I manage my time well.
4. I enjoy sharing knowledge or skills with others.
5. I seek opportunities to learn practical skills that benefit me and can help others.
6. I critically consider the opinions and information presented by others. I provide constructive feedback when needed.
7. I am confident in my ability to solve my problems.

Social

1. I consciously try to alter behaviors or attitudes that have previously caused problems in my interactions with others.
2. I choose partner(s) who respect my wants, needs, and choices in my dating or sexual relationships.
3. I feel supported, cared for and respected in my relationships.
4. I communicate effectively with others, including sharing my views and listening to those of others.
5. I consider the feelings of others, and I do not act in hurtful or selfish ways.
6. I try to see the good in my friends and support them.
7. I participate in a wide variety of social activities. I find opportunities to form new relationships.

Occupational

1. I get personal satisfaction and enrichment from my work.
2. I believe that I am able to contribute my knowledge, skills, and talents at work.
3. At work, I seek out opportunities to improve my knowledge and skills.
4. I balance my social life and job responsibilities well.
5. I effectively handle stress related to work responsibilities.
6. My workload is manageable.
7. I explore paid and/or volunteer opportunities that interest me.

The Results

Higher scores in each category indicate you are engaging in healthy behaviors regularly in that particular dimension.

It can be helpful to look at individual statements on which you scored lower, as these could be goals for you to set moving forward to improve your wellness.

What is even more interesting is to note which categories have high scores, while which are scoring lower. Lower scores on a given dimension mean you have some work to do in this area of your life. Areas with lower scores just indicate dimensions of your life where there is room for improvement. Take a look at these dimensions, as each of the statements could represent a potential new goal for you toward becoming a whole person.

Dimensions where you scored below 14 indicate some potential hazards for you. This means this particular dimension is receiving very little priority in your life, and your well-being in this area is at risk. Review any of these areas carefully and consider how you would like to make plans to improve your focus on this important dimension of wellness

Tips on How to Achieve Wholeness

Achieving wholeness is about finding balance in each of the aspects of your life so that you are well in all areas. Becoming a whole person is essentially the same as making any positive change in your life. You rely on your knowledge about the situation, you align your situation with your beliefs and ideals, then you make a plan that you can place into action. But, let's examine those stages a little more closely.

Who Are You?

If you want to make changes for the better in your life, it's important to have an accurate, realistic picture of where you are balanced and where you are struggling. Gather information that can be helpful, including self-assessment results, feedback from people you trust, and your own personal reflections about the various aspects of your life that feel positive and those that need attention. Be sure to include information on all of the aspects discussed earlier, as well as any you think may be lacking on that list.



Knowledge about yourself can be uncomfortable to confront, particularly when it is about the areas of your life that need to change. Looking so closely in the mirror may raise some issues, so be sure you take this into consideration. But, this knowledge is essential, because, without it, you won't have the power to really change your life and achieve wholeness.

What Do You Believe?

Being a whole person means you are in balance, and that can only be achieved when all aspects of your life are in harmony with your personal beliefs and values. Your beliefs make you unique and special, and they also should guide your decisions. As a part of your knowledge seeking phase, it is also important to examine areas of your life that may feel disconnected from your values and set new goals accordingly.

Checking in with your beliefs also means reaffirming your commitment to becoming whole and finding wellness. You must make a conscious choice to become balanced, then choose that path each and every day in order to fully achieve it.

What Do I Want to Achieve?

Without a plan, dreams cannot become reality. Now that you understand where your life is balanced and where you need to focus, it is time to make a plan. Set goals in each of the seven dimensions of your life, then make an actionable plan for how you would like to achieve those goals.

A plan provides a starting point and something to work toward and setting goals in each of your dimensions can help you see how these are all interconnected.

How Will I Get There?

The most important step in this journey is to take mindful action toward achieving your dream of becoming whole. Showing up each day to work on your goals and being consistent with your focus and attention can help you achieve your dreams.

You must choose each day to renew your decision to honor this work and yourself, and you will have to be patient, as this work does not happen instantly.

Other Suggestions and Tips

- Take risks. Making changes in your life is difficult and making the decision to focus on this work can feel risky at times. But from true risk you reap real rewards that can enhance your life in immeasurable ways.

- Reassess each day. Without examining your progress, you'll never know how well your plan is working. Reassessment helps you make changes in areas where your plan needs adjusting, and it allows you to evaluate your choices regularly to see if maybe your earlier decisions need to be revisited. Making this time for yourself each day can help you stay focused and intentional in the work of moving toward wholeness.

- Take the time to care for yourself. Maintaining your health is important, because with it, you cannot accomplish your other goals and dreams. Be sure you are nourishing your body with all it needs, getting enough exercise and rest, and managing your stress appropriately, or all your efforts won't have a foundation of wellness.



- Set boundaries that work for you. Your priorities change as you move through life, and setting boundaries is a great way to ensure that you are able to stay committed to those things you hold most dearly in your life. Say no to those things that are not aligned with your values, beliefs, and personal goals for yourself, and say yes to opportunities that will help you achieve your dream of being a whole person.

- Don't be nervous when things don't work out. The unexpected will happen, and you can use life's little (and big) obstacles as learning experiences rather than just treating them as stressful. Being resilient and adaptable can help you learn to achieve balance and wellness no matter what curve balls life throws at you, so start practicing now.

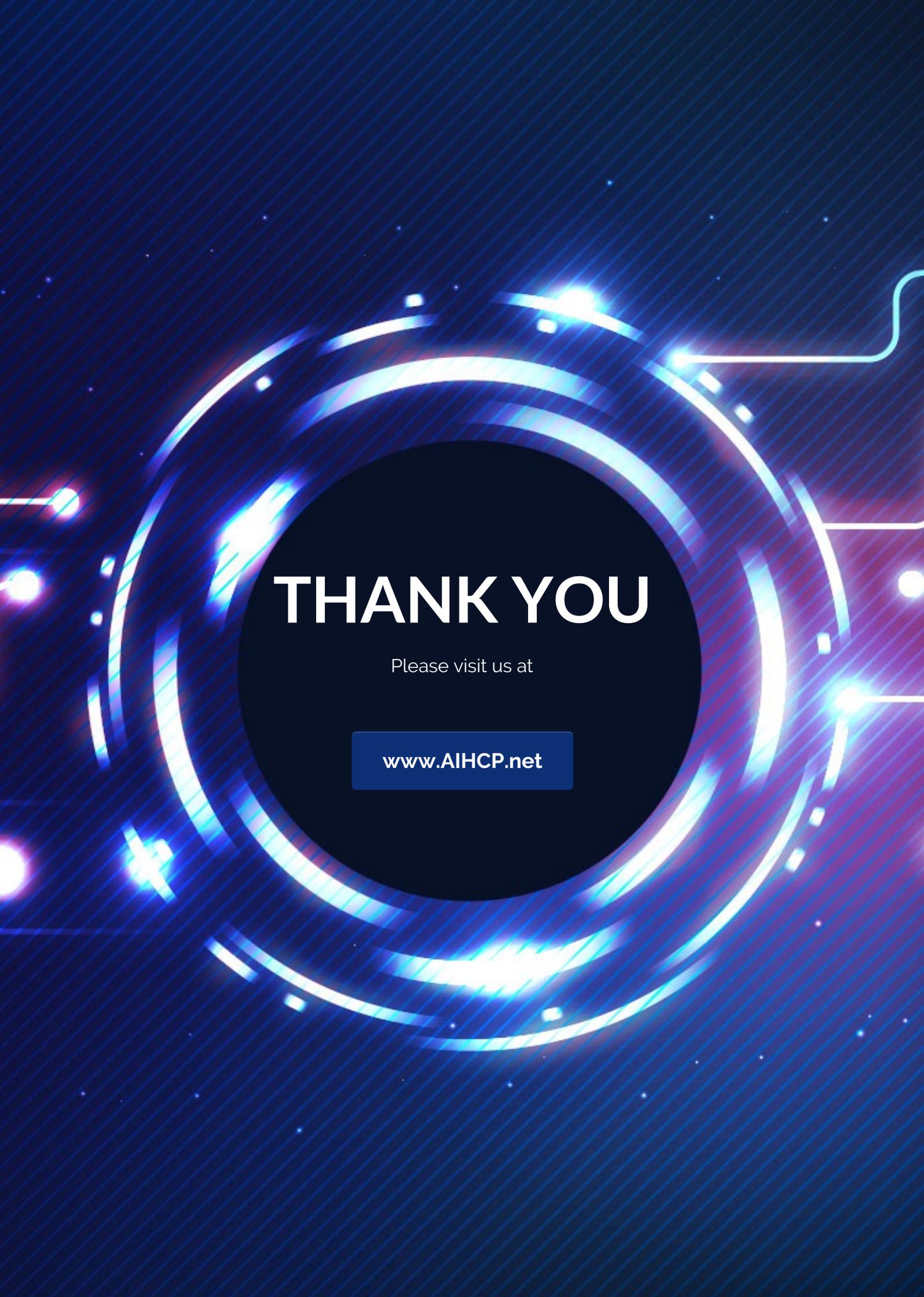
- Remember that balance may not always be possible. There may be times in your life when one or more dimensions are overruled by other needs. Family crises, financial setbacks, and illness can all force you into focusing on what needs to get done for periods of time. It's okay, and this will pass in time. Do what you need to get life back on track, and when things start to slow back down, recommit to focusing on yourself again

- Maintaining a positive mental attitude is a great way to stay focused on your intention as well as embrace all the life has to offer along your journey toward wellness. Life is not going to go the way you expected, but with a positive outlook, you can keep things in perspective and maintain a lower stress level.

Final Thoughts

When you are able to focus on all the dimensions of your wellness, and to successfully find balance between and among them, then you can become a whole person. You will experience harmony and balance when you exhibit healthy behaviors in all of the important parts of your life. You can enjoy the freedom of living the life that works best for you and embracing everything about life that makes you happy and fulfilled.

Becoming a whole person can happen at any stage in life and learning to balance the various dimensions of life is an on-going and lifelong challenge that you will need to address again and again as you age, grow, and change. But, once you've developed the right mindset and skills, you'll be ready to tackle the hard work of becoming whole at any point in your life.



THANK YOU

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