



What is Community Wellness Connections?

Community Wellness Connections (CWC) is a community partnership housed under Healthy Adams County. Partners include: Adams County Arts Council, ARC of Adams County, Gettysburg Area Recreation Authority, Gettysburg College, Harrisburg Area Community College, Healthy Adams Bicycle & Pedestrian, Inc., Penn State Extension, South Central Community Action Programs, Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve, Under the Horizon, United Way of Adams County, WellSpan Health, Adams County Library System, YWCA Gettysburg & Adams County and other community members.

What does CWC do?

- CWC promotes the dimensions of health and wellness: Mind, Body, Spirit, and Community.
- Connect people with events and activities that relate to each dimension through an organized resource tool.
- Look for ways to engage the community in addressing Adams County health challenges that include:
 - 72% with body mass index in overweight/obesity categories
 - 19% exercising as recommended
 - 22% with depression/anxiety disorders
 - 59% with self-reported depressive symptoms
- Aging population

How to participate?

Visit www.adamswellness.org to learn more about each dimension of wellness. Answer some self-assessment questions for each dimension.

- Events are listed on the website. All events/activities are free or very low cost.
- If your organization is organizing any free or low- cost activities that would promote any of the dimensions please email jgastley2@wellspan.org and we would be happy to add them to our calendar.
- Please call Healthy Adams County at 717-337-4137 with any other questions.

~ MIND DIMENSION ~

Meet a Community Wellness Connector



Connectors are folks who bring people together around activities and ideas that address our four dimensions of well-being: mind, body, spirit, and community. Since March is a month that we focus on appreciating women and what works for them in aspects of being able to rejuvenate the mind, body, and soul, we interviewed Elizabeth Cooper, who is a woman veteran Peer Support Specialist and serves veterans with barriers to employment through the Department of Labor and Industry for almost 2 years. Before landing a wonderful job assisting veterans, she served with the Department of Corrections as a Corrections Officer for 10 years.

How have you been involved in the health of the mind?

Throughout my own recovery I have been able to implement several activities

into my daily routine that have assisted me in being centered in my life, and in turn being able to provide these helpful activities to other women veterans, friends, clients, and family members. I pray every day, exercise at a minimum of 3 times per week, and have zeroed in on decreasing rage, depression, anxiety, fear, shame, and hate by using EFT-Emotional Freedom Technique, and attend Peer to Peer Support Groups monthly. All of these techniques implemented into my life have helped me overcome my PTSD, depression, anxiety, and self-worth issues.

Do you think such activities have made a difference to the participants?

All of these activities are evidence based practices that have been proven to be effective in decreasing stress, overcoming depression and anxiety, boosting memory and concentration, overcoming trauma, and finding self-worth and self-awareness. When presenting these to my clients and family members I relate the experiences that I had, and how using these tools have helped me recover. When doing this for people it makes it more relatable in turn, they

are more inclined to follow through and have reported that they have made a difference.

What message about the well-being of the mind would you like to pass along?

During the pandemic people were isolated, in turn affecting their mental health. Isolation brings on suicidal thoughts, less restful sleep, decreased ability to regulate eating, more stress, and brings a greater difficulty in paying attention and doing complex tasks. I was led to my church by God and prayer, this enabled me to participate in a woman's bible study, become even more involved in my community, and also assist members of my church and peer to peer support group with overcoming the same issues that I endured. We need each-other, we are all children of God, and we all have unique gifts to support one another. 1 John 3:18 "Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth".

Effects of Peer-to-Peer Support on Depression

Written By: Elizabeth Cooper, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist with PA CareerLink and member of Healthy Adams County and Community Wellness Connections.

As I dialed the number to find a therapist in my area through our SEAP program, I wondered to myself...How did I get here?

An established woman, a wife, a mother of 3, a combat veteran, former corrections officer trained specifically in crisis and suicide intervention, suffering from anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Not all these ailments derived from war. Sometimes life happens and it produces a traumatic event.

After I realized I had been harboring feelings of anger, hate, rage, and resentment from experiencing my own traumatic experiences in my past, I started my journey. I was led to a woman veterans website named WoVeN. I started to read about how I could join an online peer to peer support group that would last 8 weeks, and we would meet via zoom weekly.

I attended my first WoVeN group, and it was nothing earth shattering, introductions, and some ice breaker activities. Fast forward to my fourth week and I was presented with another bump in my road, divorce.

I really didn't even want to attend group that night, I just wanted to wallow in my own self-pity. I decided that it was, what was best for me in that moment. I logged on and talked with my women veteran peers. I learned that each one of them had suffered and persevered through similar situations. These amazing women were able to provide guidance, wisdom, and words of encouragement all in an hour and a half while still following a set curriculum to overcome other barriers. They did not lecture or TELL me what I HAD to do. They took a different approach, they guided me in the ways that assisted them in their own experience.

According to Pfeiffer, Paul N, et al. "Efficacy of Peer Support Interventions for Depression: A Meta-Analysis." General Hospital Psychiatry, U.S. National Library of Medicine, 13 Nov. 2011, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3052992/>. Peer support interventions were superior to usual care in reducing depressive symptoms. Unfortunately,

depression that can be subsided with antidepressants in patients, more than half of the patient's relapse with a year. Not only is this avenue of approach not cost effective, but the programs also tend to be labor intensive, poorly reimbursed, and are not widely available for people without insurance.

Volunteer peers that have faced similar experiences are able to bring all people together in small group settings either in-person, over the phone, or virtually. These services have the potential to be widely available to people in a relatively low cost.

Another fact and speaking from my own experience, peer support enables people to take an active role in their own self-care, conjures hope, decreases isolation, and provides positive role modeling. I am still in therapy, I still attend my WoVeN (Alumni group now) monthly meetings, have a greater presence in my community, a stronger faith, prioritize my self-care, and have remained in a better than new marriage. Everyone wants to do better with assisting their peers with mental health barriers, and peer to peer support is a way to conquer this plague.



Mindfulness and Stress Reduction Workshops Spring 2022

The *Mindfulness and Stress Reduction* course will be presented as an interactive Zoom workshop series this spring. The three workshops build on each other, so all three are suggested, but they are also designed so that each one can offer value if taken alone.

Dr. Julie Falk, who has taught the course for over ten years, is certified to teach mindfulness by the University of Massachusetts Center for Mindfulness.

This free program is funded by the WellSpan Gettysburg Hospital Foundation. Registration is required: please call Healthy Adams County at (717) 337-4137 or email jgastley2@wellspan.org.

Zoom details for all three workshops:
Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85731004142>
Meeting ID: 857 3100 4142 Passcode: 1920

Mindfulness and Stress Reduction: The Foundations Sunday, March 13, 2022 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

This workshop will introduce mindfulness and awareness of the mind-body connection in order to shape more effective responses to stress and difficulty. We will practice some techniques of meditation, as well as awareness of body and breath. These practices can be especially helpful for people suffering from physical or emotional conditions that alter the quality of life, helping them to develop new patterns of responding and co-existing with difficulty.

Mindfulness and Stress Reduction: Building Skills Sunday, April 10, 2022 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

This workshop builds on the skills begun in the Foundations workshop but can also stand alone for those who have some familiarity with meditation. We will review the foundations briefly and then work on deepening skill in meditation with awareness of the breath. We will explore gentle yoga as a moving meditation. We will also deepen our exploration of mindfulness as a strategy for coping with stress and difficulty, and introduce loving-kindness meditation as a way of shaping our experience.

Mindfulness and Stress Reduction: Life as Practice Sunday, May 15, 2022 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The final workshop in the mindfulness series will focus on how skills in mindfulness and meditation can play out in our everyday world to improve quality of life. New meditative techniques will include walking meditation, open awareness, and some guided imagery. We will examine how unhelpful patterns in our reactions to stress might be changed with time and practice and discuss strategies for making practice ongoing.

When to Worry About Memory Loss



Written By: Julie Falk PhD is an Integrative Wellness Coach and mindfulness teacher who chairs Healthy Adams County's Behavioral Health Task Force.

It's a rare person that is blessed with a photographic memory that never declines. We all experience flaws in our ability to recollect things, not all related to age. Health providers have long known that people who are highly stressed don't remember their instructions or what was said. That's why instructions are printed out and supportive family members are enlisted. Still, the largest number of changes in memory are indeed associated with growing older.

Our cognitive skills change over time as our brains age. For example, as a senior citizen, I can still do fine on an essay test because my ability to reason and draw connections is strong. However, I'm not so skilled now with objective tests that require me to memorize facts and spit them back. That's nothing to be concerned about—just natural change that doesn't affect the quality of my life.

As we age, most of us experience a growing frequency of "senior moments." We can't remember where we left our keys; search for a name that just won't surface in the moment; and forget what we were just about to say. For some, this may be a harbinger of more serious dementia that is developing. For most of us, fortunately, it's a natural part of the aging process. When should we be concerned, and what can we do about it?

Don't worry if:

- The things you forget are small and don't affect your ability to live and function independently
 - You're forgetful during periods of stress, such as dealing with illness or grief
 - You're living through a period of intense change in your life
- Seek some advice from your health provider if:**
- People notice that you ask the same questions repeatedly
 - You mix up the names of objects, like saying "clock" instead of "chair"
 - You get lost while walking or driving in familiar places
 - Your memory losses affect your ability to live independently with safety



Memory loss is not always caused by aging, so it's important to let your provider evaluate whether your changes can be reversed. For example, perhaps you are deficient in vitamin B12, or maybe you are reacting to a medication, or have a dysfunction of one of your organs.

Remember that there are things you can do to prevent cognitive decline, starting at any age (the younger the better!). Adopt a healthy eating plan that optimizes the well-being of your heart and vascular system. Mediterranean eating and the DASH diet can help control your blood pressure and circulation so that your brain and nervous system are well nourished and oxygenated. Exercise and move to the best of your ability and keep your mind stimulated with interests and hobbies. To work with the natural challenges we face as the brain ages and memory grows less instantly accessible, try some adaptive habits.

- Use memory aids, like "to do" lists.
- Associate a new item with something already familiar. Link a person to a song or a story that will make them easier to recall.
- Limit the use of recreational drugs and alcohol.

Above all, have a little compassion for yourself when those senior moments show up. Getting distressed will only make it harder to recall. Let your mind wander for a moment and allow the sought-after memory to surface in its own time. If you're like me, that will be in the middle of the night when there's no one to tell!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Virtual Death Café(s)
Date: 2nd Thursday of each month
Time: 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Format: Zoom
Sponsored by the End of Life Committee, an affiliate of Healthy Adams County
Discussion in a safe space, to explore issues about death, dying, life and living and its effects on ourselves and others.
Registration is required. To register please call 717-337-4137 or email jgastley2@wellspan.org

Physical Fitness Task Force's Winter Fitness Hikes
Sunday, March 13th, 1:30 PM. 4 miles. Gettysburg Rec Park to Pickett's Charge Field.
Sunday, March 27th, 1:30 PM. 3.5 miles. The Trout Loop, Tom's Creek, Michaux State Forest, Fairfield.
Join Healthy Adams County's Physical Fitness Task Force for free guided winter hikes (following CDC guidelines for outdoor activities that are in

effect at the time of the hike). Hikes are open to everyone. Wear good walking/hiking shoes and bring a bottle of water. Hikes are held rain or shine (except for severe weather). Pre-registration is not required. Call 717-337-4137 or email jgastley2@wellspan.org for more details.

Physical Fitness Task Force's Spring Walking Party Series
Date(s): Weekly, April 20, 2022 through Wednesday, June 8, 2022
Location: Various locations (call 717-337-4137 or email jgastley2@wellspan.org for a list of locations)
For questions email jgastley2@wellspan.org or call 717-337-4137.
Caregiver... A Love Story Free Virtual Documentary Screening
Date: Thursday, April 28, 2022
Time: 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Location: Zoom
Caregiver: A Love Story is the tale of one man struggling to care for his dying wife. When 59-year-old Bambi decides to forgo further treatment for her cancer and die at home, her husband, Rick, leaves his job to become her primary caregiver – a role for which he has no experience

and little support.
This film highlights an essential, yet largely unseen workforce – the 53 million non-professional family caregivers of America, working double-time and for free in jobs that they are completely untrained for. It challenges viewers to acknowledge the growing strain on those who step in as nurses, housekeepers and aides while grappling with grief and loss. For questions or to register for the film please email jgastley2@wellspan.org or call 717-337-4137.

Stay tuned for further details about an upcoming screening of the documentary 'The Upstanders'. 'The Upstanders' is an INDEFILIX Original documentary about resilience, and the power of connection to end bullying.

For questions or to find out more please call 717-337-4137 or email jgastley2@wellspan.org

*For a complete listing of events related to the current Community Wellness Connections Dimension please visit www.adamswellness.org.