

# Mental Health and Well-Being Narrative

## MINNESOTA PUBLIC HEALTH MENTAL WELL-BEING ADVISORY GROUP

*These are public health core values and beliefs regarding mental health and well-being. This is intended to help shape public discourse and investments in mental health promotion and illness prevention work.*

### **Everyone deserves opportunity for Mental Health and Well-Being.**

**Brains are built through experience.** The interaction between our biology and experiences shapes the chemicals and structures of our brains, particularly during early childhood and adolescence.

- **Fear, trauma, and chronic stress negatively impacts Mental Health and Well-Being.** While we all experience stress and hard times, the cumulative impact of chronic or intense stress is real. It gets built into our bodies and is passed on to the next generation.
- **Where we live, learn, work, and play impacts our Mental Health and Well-Being.** This includes structures and environments that are safe, nurturing, inviting, toxin free, and facilitate relationships, community and culture.
- **Resilience is not enough in the face of oppression.** Oppression is bad for our Mental Health and Well-Being. Intentional systemic changes to end oppression are essential to help individuals, families and communities thrive.
- **Physical health & Mental Health and Well-Being are intertwined.** When we experience physical illness, injury or pain it has a negative impact on our Mental Health and Well-Being. Improving our physical health can improve our Mental Health and Well-Being.

**Everyone and every system has a role and responsibility in ensuring our collective Mental Health and Well-Being.** We all benefit when public and private organizations work together.

- **Mental Health and Well-Being happens in and through community.** We can spread and protect Mental Health and Well-Being by building positive relationships, social connections and drawing on community and cultural assets.
- **Mental Health and Well-Being requires a sense of purpose and power.** To truly experience Mental Health and Well-Being we need to feel that we have the power to shape our world and change our lives and conditions for the better. For many, historical trauma is a reality that takes away our sense of purpose and power and continues to be part of our lived experience and reality.
- **Positive relationships are central to Mental Health and Well-Being.** Relationships provide meaning and facilitate skill development and feelings of belonging. Lack of positive relationships and isolation are detrimental. Positive relationships are not automatic;

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families and communities need information, resources, and other supports to help cultivate and sustain them.

- **Culture shapes our definitions and understanding of Mental Health and Well-Being.** It is OK and healthy for individuals and communities to have different perspectives on what it means to be well and how to achieve well-being. Culture is a source of healing, connection and strength.
- **Everyone needs opportunity to learn and practice skills to manage life and engage in the world.** Skills to manage stress, find balance and focus, and engage socially, are critical components that should be cultivated throughout the lifespan in both formal and informal settings. Skills and experiences that help people feel valuable and engage in their family, community and economy are also critical.

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