Sessions 1-8

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Session 1
Daily Wellness
Beach Ball Exercise
Our Purpose Here...

Why learn about wellness and self-care?

• Wellness and health are important life skills

• You are in transition, and physical and mental health are key concerns

The goals of this course are:

• To increase your knowledge and awareness of physical and mental health and its importance to your life

• To increase your access to support and resources
California Foster Youth: Wellness and Health Concerns

- Sex
- Mental Health/Illness
- Self-Image, Self-Worth, Body Image
- Stress
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Violence
- Relationships
- Fitness
- Physical Health
- Counseling and Support
- Life in the System

- Finances
- Personal Care and Hygiene
- Emotional Stability and Stress
- Decision Making
- Time Management
- Interpersonal Skills
- Diversity
- The Future
- Legal Issues
- Parenting Issues
- Supporting Each Other

Focus group results, Spring 2013, YESS-ILP program youth
Setting Ground Rules

Let’s make some agreements that will help us feel safe sharing in this class:
The Tree That is Me

- **Ground**: My foundation
- **Roots**: What nourishes me
- **Trunk**: My biggest strength
- **Branches**: My positive traits
- **Knots**: Obstacles
- **Leaves**: How I find balance and what I do for fun
- **Fruit**: What I want to contribute to the world
- **Sky**: Passing on what I’ve learned
The Tree That Is Me
Key Concepts: Health & Well-Being

• **Health**: A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (World Health Organization)

• **Well-Being**: Preventing illness and enhancing overall quality of life; includes ability to function well in school, career, relationships, etc.
Key Concepts:
Disease/Illness

• A disordered or incorrectly functioning organ, part, structure, or system of the body resulting from the effect of genetic or developmental errors, infection, poisons, nutritional deficiencies or imbalances, toxicity, or unfavorable environmental factors; illness; sickness; ailment (dictionary.com)
Wellspring Wellness

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 10 (optimum), mark your current health level in these seven essential areas:

Social Health
How well do you interact with others? Are you able to maintain long-term friendships? Are you comfortable in new social situations and the company of others?

Mental Health
Are you open to new ideas? Do you seek out new experiences and learn new skills? What is the quality of the information and entertainment you allow into your mind?

Spiritual Health
How connected do you feel to the higher power in your life? Do you enjoy a sense of purpose and peace? Do you regularly study, meditate, pray or worship?

Physical Health
What is your physical condition? Are you receiving good nutrition, drinks plenty of water, getting regular exercise and enjoying the proper weight for your height?

Career Health
Do you like what you do for a living? Does your career reflect and advance your deepest values? Is your work meaningful and suited to your skills and interests?

Financial Health
Are you living within your means? Is your debt within manageable limits? Do you make charitable contributions and save for the future? Are you properly insured?

Family Health
Are you in a loving relationship with shared values? Do you give your family time and attention? Do you have a close connection with children, parents, and relatives?

Adapted from www.wellspringdaily.com
Spirit

Body

Mind
Remember, you are in transition!

Transition is the internal process people go through when adjusting to and coping with external changes.

Transitions involve...

- An identity shift: Changes in the way you see yourself, and in the way others see you
- A change in routines, roles, and responsibilities
- Three stages:
  1. Letting go
  2. Neutral/awkward stage
  3. New beginnings
- Extra stress ... and therefore increased need for attention to health and wellness

(Bridges 1990)
Take It Home Activities

• Daily Wellness Log
• Having Fun with Fitness
• CYC Cookbook Submission
Session 2
Daily Wellness
Bees and Butterflies
Exercise and the Mind/Body Connection

• How do you feel in your body now?
• How is this different than how you felt before the game? Is your heart rate different? What else is different?
• How do you feel emotionally? Is this different than before the game?
• Getting out, playing with friends, and getting exercise can change how you feel and see the world.
Take It Home Reports

• Has anyone done a “Take It Home” activity since last week?

• Can 1-3 students share what you learned?
  – What did you do? What did you learn?
  – Was it fun, uncomfortable, difficult, boring, or a bit of all of the above?
  – Did it help you learn to take better care of yourself?
Wellness and Self-Care Topics

- Diet and Nutrition
- Lifestyle
- Exercise
- Sleep
- Personal Hygiene
- Accessing Medical Care
# Jeopardy!

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FINAL JEOPARDY!
Winner!
How do you take care of yourself?
How Do You Take Care of Yourself?

We asked Community College students from all over California who are transitioning out of foster care how they take care of themselves day to day. Here are some of their responses:

• Be healthy
• Keep a positive attitude
• Maintain good hygiene (bathing, brushing teeth, hair care, nail care, etc.)
• Eat right, control how much you eat, drink water, eat fruits and veggies
• Have clean clothes
• Get proper sleep
• Use music as stress relief and therapy
• Exercise and maintain a healthy body image
• Make and save money
• Maintain self-esteem and confidence
• Use cell phones for communication
• Continue to take medication
• Start the day in a positive frame of mind (eg. wake up with music)
CYC Cookbook: Recipes for Life
Instructions:

Browse the cookbook and select a recipe, story, or other cookbook page that you like or find useful. Jot down a few notes about why you like that page.

In small groups, share with each other what pages you selected and why.

Then work with your group members to come up with a new page/contribution idea for the cookbook.
Take it Home Activities

• Daily Wellness Log
• Having Fun with Fitness
  Copyright ©Sarah E. Kremer, MA, ATR-BC 2007
• CYC Cookbook Submission
Session 3
Taking Care and Keeping Your Balance
How I Get Through A Tough Day
Key Concept: Stress

- The body’s reaction to change that requires a physical, mental, or emotional adjustment or response. Stress can come from any situation or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, nervous, or anxious.

  - Angela Morrow, R.N.
What is your definition of STRESS?
Key Concept: Coping

• Refers to the thoughts and actions we use to deal with stress. In large part, feeling stressed or not depends on whether we believe we have the coping resources to deal with the challenges facing us.

  - Owen Kelly, Ph.D.
Key Concept: Self-Care

- Decisions and actions that an individual can take to cope with a health problem or to improve his or her health.

- Gale Encyclopedia of Public Health
Key Concept: Self-Monitoring

- Paying attention to changes in your body, in your feelings, and in your life to notice when something might be going wrong.
More About Stress

• Stress is the brain’s response to any “demand”
• A stressor can be a real or perceived change occurring in your life
• Stress can come from both major and minor changes
• Stress affects your body
• Some stress can be good
• Everyone experiences stress differently!
Rate yourself on the STRESS TEST
Any Volunteers to Share Results?
Meditation: What Is It and How Is It Done?

The purpose of meditation is to train your mind to help you relax, get still, and see your life more clearly and calmly.

The aim of meditation is not for thinking, planning, or solving problems, but to allow yourself to experience the stillness that is in your mind. The stillness is always there waiting for you.

Meditation can be very enjoyable. But it takes a little discipline.

When you try it for the first time, five minutes may be all you are ready to do. Even this is helpful! Then see if you can do this for longer periods with practice.

Let’s try a simple meditation called “The Circle Of Stillness.”
Take it Home Activities

- One Big Thing
- Stress Log
- CYC Cookbook Submission
- Circle of Stillness Meditation
Session 4
Taking Care and Keeping Your Balance
Yoga: Let’s Try It!

From www.yogaactivist.org
Take It Home Reports

• Did anyone do a “Take It Home activity” since last week?

• Can 1-3 students share what you learned?
  – What did you do? What did you learn?
  – Was it fun, uncomfortable, difficult, boring, or a bit of all of the above?
  – Did it help you learn to take better care of yourself?
Activity: Self-Care Collage

• Find collage images (pre-cut images from magazines) that represent the tactics we just discussed, both more and less constructive, that you found to be true for yourself.
• Fold the paper provided into three sections. Create a collage using only the less constructive tactics on the left side and another collage using only the more constructive tactics on the right side.
• Now, think about what it will take to move from the left side to the right side. What do you need for yourself or who can support you to use more constructive tactics?
• What do you need to change yourself and let go of the less constructive tactics?
• Use the middle panel to draw or write or use more collage images that represent this transformation.
• Let’s share!

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Taking Care of the Basics

The Icarus Project
A Radical Mental Health Support Network
by and for people struggling with dangerous gifts commonly labeled as mental illness
# Relationships: Assets or Stressors?

Consider the relationships that are most important in your life. In the left column below, list the people in your life who are “assets,” or who provide you with acceptance, support, and assistance. In the right column, list those that are “stressors”, or that create stress, make you feel bad about yourself, ask you to do things that are bad for you, or hurt you. In the middle column, list those people who are both assets and stressors, or present to you a “mixed bag.”

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<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>MIXED BAGS</th>
<th>STRESSORS</th>
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Consider:

- How can you nurture and strengthen your asset relationships?
- How can you work to heal and relieve stress from difficult but beneficial relationships?
- Which relationships might need to be ended because they just aren’t healthy?
- What other strategies can you think of to improve the quality of your relationships?
Are Your Relationships Healthy?

• Do you and your partner/friend(s) have fun together?
• Do you feel that you are liked and respected for who you are?
• Does “going out for a good time” with your partner/friend(s) usually involve the use of alcohol or other drugs?
• Are you able to be yourself when spending time with your partner/friend(s)?
• Do you feel comfortable about the ways in which you and your partner/friend(s) resolve conflict?
• Is jealousy a stressor in your relationships?
• Are you able to express warm and intimate feelings in your relationships?
• Do you feel your partner/friend(s) are supportive during easy and hard times?
• Do you feel your partner/friend(s) hold you responsible for his, her, or their feelings or behaviors?
• Would you like to get out of a relationship but don’t know how?
• Would you like to get into a relationship but don’t know how?
• Can you share and discuss with your partner/friend(s) your answers to all the previous questions?

From http://counseling.studentlife.uiowa.edu/self-help/are-your-relationships-healthy/
Group Activity: Scenarios on Stress

• Work together within your groups and answer these two questions for each of the scenarios provided:
  – What can the person in the scenario do to try and solve the issue at hand?
  – What can the person do to try and reduce and manage stress?
8 Tips For Getting Unstressed!

1. **Talk to a doctor:** Get a check-up now and then to talk about diet, exercise, sleep, and other ways of handling your stress.

2. **Exercise:** 20 or 30 minutes each day.

3. **Get enough sleep:** Eight hours of peaceful sleep can change your energy level and your outlook on life.

4. **Eat right:** Eat several servings of vegetables, fruits, and protein. Hold back on sugar, fat, caffeine and alcohol.

5. **Lose the news:** Instead of tuning into the news, do something you enjoy.

6. **Dance to the music:** Doing something you enjoy could include listening to music, maybe as you work out or go for a walk. If you feel like it, turn on the music and dance!

7. **Prioritize—then get to work:** Take five minutes each evening or morning to write down what you need to do, and prioritize each item.

8. **Let it go!** Try to let go of the little things, and remember: “They are all little things.”

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Take it Home Activities

• One Big Thing
• Stress Log
• CYC Cookbook Submission
• Circle of Stillness Meditation
Session 5
Healthy Mind, Healthy Heart
Language Perceptions Icebreaker

• What words come to mind when you hear the terms:
  – “Physical health”
  – “Physical illness”
  – “Mental health”
  – “Mental illness”

• What does this tell us about attitudes toward mental health and mental illness?

From Mental Health & High School Curriculum Guide, Module 2, ©2010 Teenmentalhealth.org
Key Concept: Mental Health

- A state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. (World Health Organization)

- The emotional and spiritual resilience that enables us to enjoy life and survive pain, disappointment, and sadness; a positive sense of well-being and an underlying belief in our own and others’ self worth. (Health Education Authority, UK, 1997)
Key Concept: Mental Illness

- A variety of psychiatric (emotional, thinking, and behavioral) problems that vary in intensity and duration, and may recur from time to time. Major mental illnesses include Anxiety, Mood, Eating, and Psychotic Disorders. Mental illnesses are diagnosable conditions that require medical treatment as well as other supports. (www.cmha.ca)
Key Concept:
Mental Health Problems

- The more common struggles and adjustment difficulties that affect everybody from time to time. These problems tend to happen when people are going through difficult times in life, such as the end of a relationship, the death of someone close, conflict in relations with family or friends, or stresses at home, school, or work. Feeling stressed or having the blues is a normal response to the psychological or social challenges most people encounter at some time or another. Mental health problems are usually short-term reactions to a particular stressor, such as a loss, painful event, or illness. (Mental Illness Foundation, 2003)
- Remember: You are in transition!
Today’s focus

Wellspring Wellness

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 10 (optimum), mark your current health level in these seven essential areas:

Social Health
How well do you interact with others? Are you able to maintain long-term friendships? Are you comfortable in new social situations and the company of others?

Mental Health
Are you open to new ideas? Do you seek out new experiences and learn new skills? What is the quality of the information and entertainment you allow into your mind?

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Do you like what you do for a living? Does your career reflect and advance your deepest values? Is your work meaningful and suited to your skills and interests?

Family Health
Are you in a loving relationship with shared values? Do you give your family time and attention? Do you have a close connection with children, parents, and relatives?

Adapted from www.wellspringdaily.com
Key Concept: Emotional Health

- Emotional health is defined by the degree to which you feel emotionally secure and relaxed in everyday life.
- An emotionally healthy person has a relaxed body, an open mind, and an open heart.
- The more emotional health you possess, the more self-esteem you generally have.
- Emotionally healthy people feel safe and secure with their own emotions and feelings.
- Emotionally healthy people feel their feelings and emotions instead of avoiding them or trying to control them.
MAKING WAVES
The brain wave spectrum divides into 5 bands with different associated states:

- **DELTA WAVES (δ)**, 0.5–4Hz: Deep unconscious, intuition and insight
- **THETA WAVES (θ)**, 4–8Hz: Subconscious creativity, deep relaxation
- **ALPHA (α)** waves, 8–13Hz: "Spacey" and dreamy state, receptive and passive
- **BETA (β)** waves, 13–30Hz: Conscious thought, external focus
- **GAMMA (γ)** waves, 30–100Hz: Not well understood, but linked to perception and alertness or anxiety

During successful meditation, the subject typically starts off with high beta (thinking), then experiences more alpha, followed by more theta and finally delta, the deepest level. After some time, the reverse process takes place, bringing the person back to beta feeling awake and refreshed, sometimes with new insights.
On a piece of paper, draw an outline of your heart.

- Who do you hold in your heart?
- Feelings as colors: Is your heart colorful?
- What do the colors represent?
- Any secret compartments?
- Protected by anything?
- Your meanings are safe: only you know what you mean by your symbols.
Take it Home Activities

• Playlist for My Health
• StoryCorps Interviewing
Session 6
Healthy Mind, Healthy Heart
The Tree That Is Me
Take It Home Reports

• Did anyone do a “take it home activity” since last week?

• Can 1-3 students share what you learned?
  – What did you do? What did you learn?
  – Was it fun, uncomfortable, difficult, boring, or a bit of all of the above?
  – Did it help you learn to take better care of yourself?
Understanding How to Carry Your Baggage

• Refer to the list of issues and concerns that you and other youth transitioning out of foster care identified in Session 1 of your workbook.
• Your instructor has already labeled cardboard blocks with these issues and problems.
• Now we need a volunteer who is willing to carry all these blocks!
• Our volunteer must carry all the baggage (blocks) without the help of props or other people.
• The rest of the group can help her/him organize and stack the blocks but must not assist with carrying or balancing the blocks.
Jigsaw Puzzle: Mental and Emotional Challenges

- Break into groups of 3-7 people.
- Each group selects a cardboard block with an issue they would like to discuss in more detail.
- As a group, complete the worksheet.
- You are now experts on one piece of a mental health puzzle.
- Share your findings with the rest of the class so we can complete the puzzle!
Steps to Wellness

1. Self-care
2. Self-monitor
3. Seek help and support
4. Self-advocate
5. Provide assistance and work with others for mutual benefit
Take It Home Activities

• Playlist for My Health
• StoryCorps Interviews
Session 7
Putting It All Together:
Empowering Ourselves and Each Other
Where are you today in your wellness tree?
Steps to Wellness

1. Self-care
2. Self-monitor
3. Seek help and support
4. Self-advocate
5. Provide assistance and work with others for mutual benefit
Brain Map Activity

“What’s on My Mind?”

• Draw an outline of your brain—it can look however you want it to look.

• Make a map showing the things that are on your mind today by using images, words, or both inside your brain.

• What is represented the most or takes up the largest space, and what is represented the least?

• Are there any changes you’d like to make in terms of what is going through your head or how much space certain thoughts, feelings, or other things take?

• Discuss as a group how you can make these changes happen.
Taking Charge of My Health: Becoming an Adult

1. I understand my health care needs and disabilities and can explain my needs to others.
2. I can explain to others how my family’s customs and beliefs affect health care decisions and treatments.
3. I carry my health insurance card every day.
4. I know my health and wellness baseline (pulse, respiration rate, elimination habits).
5. I track my own appointments, prescription refills, and expiration dates.
6. I call for my own doctor’s appointments.
7. Before a doctor’s appointment I prepare written questions to ask.
8. I know I have an option to see my doctor by myself.
9. I call in my own prescriptions.
10. I carry my important health information with me every day (i.e.: medical summary, including medical diagnosis, list of medications, allergy info., doctor’s numbers, drug store number, etc.).
11. I have a part in filing my medical records and receipts at home.
12. I pay my co-pays for medical visits.
13. I co-sign the “permission for medical treatment” form (with or without signature stamp, or can direct others to do so).
14. I know my symptoms that need quick medical attention.
15. I know what to do in case I have a medical emergency.
16. I help monitor my medical equipment so it’s in good working condition (daily and routine maintenance).
17. My family and I have a plan so I can keep my health care insurance after I turn 18.

A Bad Day, or a Mental Health Problem?

• Do you ever...
  – Feel very angry or worried?
  – Do reckless things that could harm yourself or others?
  – Feel grief for a long time after a loss or a death?
  – Think your mind is being controlled or out of control?
  – Use alcohol or drugs?
  – Exercise, diet and/or binge eat obsessively?
  – Hurt other people or destroy property?

• If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you might want to check in with your mental health provider and consider seeking treatment. If you answered yes to MULTIPLE questions above, you are very likely to need assistance.

“Understanding Mental Health and Mental Illness,”
www.teenmentalhealth.org
Take It Home Activities

• Practicing Self-Advocacy Log
• My Commitment to Taking Steps to Wellness
• Build a Habit
Session 8
Putting It All Together: Empowering Ourselves and Each Other
Decorate your own blank puzzle piece to represent who you are and what you feel you can contribute to the group. Be ready to share with the group what you have on your piece.

Then, assemble the puzzle.

This activity helps us see the power of everyone coming together. A put-together puzzle can have far more impact than separate pieces, and the final product cannot be reached without a contribution from every piece of the puzzle.
Take It Home Reports

• Did anyone do a “take it home activity” since last week?

• Can 1-3 students share what you learned?
  – What did you do? What did you learn?
  – Was it fun, uncomfortable, difficult, boring, or a bit of all of the above?
  – Did it help you learn to take better care of yourself?
Key Concept: Empowerment

• Both a process and an outcome by which people gain mastery over their own lives and affairs. Can refer to a psychological or emotional sense of empowerment, as well as actual power and influence.
Key Concept: Self-Advocacy

- An individual’s ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate, or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights.
- It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions.

(VanReusen et al., 1994)
Key Concept: Mutual Aid/Assistance

- Efforts in which individuals are both recipients and providers of help, in a group or community setting where other people are also providing and receiving support and services, such as sharing information or skills. (Shulman, 2006; Steinberg, 2004)
Imagine what it feels like when you feel powerful, confident, and masterful over your own life affairs. What situations in your life make you feel this way?

Jot down a few notes or pictures...
Set Your Goals the CHAMP Way

Challenge

What is the challenge I am facing (what is my goal)?

Hurdles

What is stopping me from reaching my goal?

Achievement

What do I get for reaching my goal?

Mentors

Who can mentor me and help me reach my goal?

Plan

What is my plan (the steps I will take to reach my goal)?
Communicating About Your Health

Remember these four topics to get the most out of a visit with your healthcare provider:

• **Diagnosis:** What’s the problem? How severe is it? What causes it? What are the risks?

• **Treatment Options:** What choices do I have? What are the pros and cons of each? Are there natural solutions?

• **Medication:** How will it help me? Are there side effects? What is the dosage? Are there dangers associated?

• **Psychological Treatments:** What is involved? How will it help me? What are the alternatives? Why is this one best? What are the risks and how long will it last? What if it does not work?

Adapted from “Communicating About Your Health.” [www.teenmentalhealth.org](http://www.teenmentalhealth.org)
Mental Health First Aid: How you can help someone in crisis!

*Five-Step Action Plan: ALGEE*

- **A**ssess the risk of suicide or harm
- **L**isten non-judgmentally
- **G**ive reassurance and information
- **E**ncourage appropriate professional help
- **E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies

www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org
Take It Home Activities

• Practicing Self-Advocacy Log
• My Commitment to Taking Steps to Wellness
• Build a Habit