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Outdoor Recreation Wellness

“The power of the outdoors”



For the Institute of Environment and Recreation Management

Presenter:

Dr. Pieter Snyman



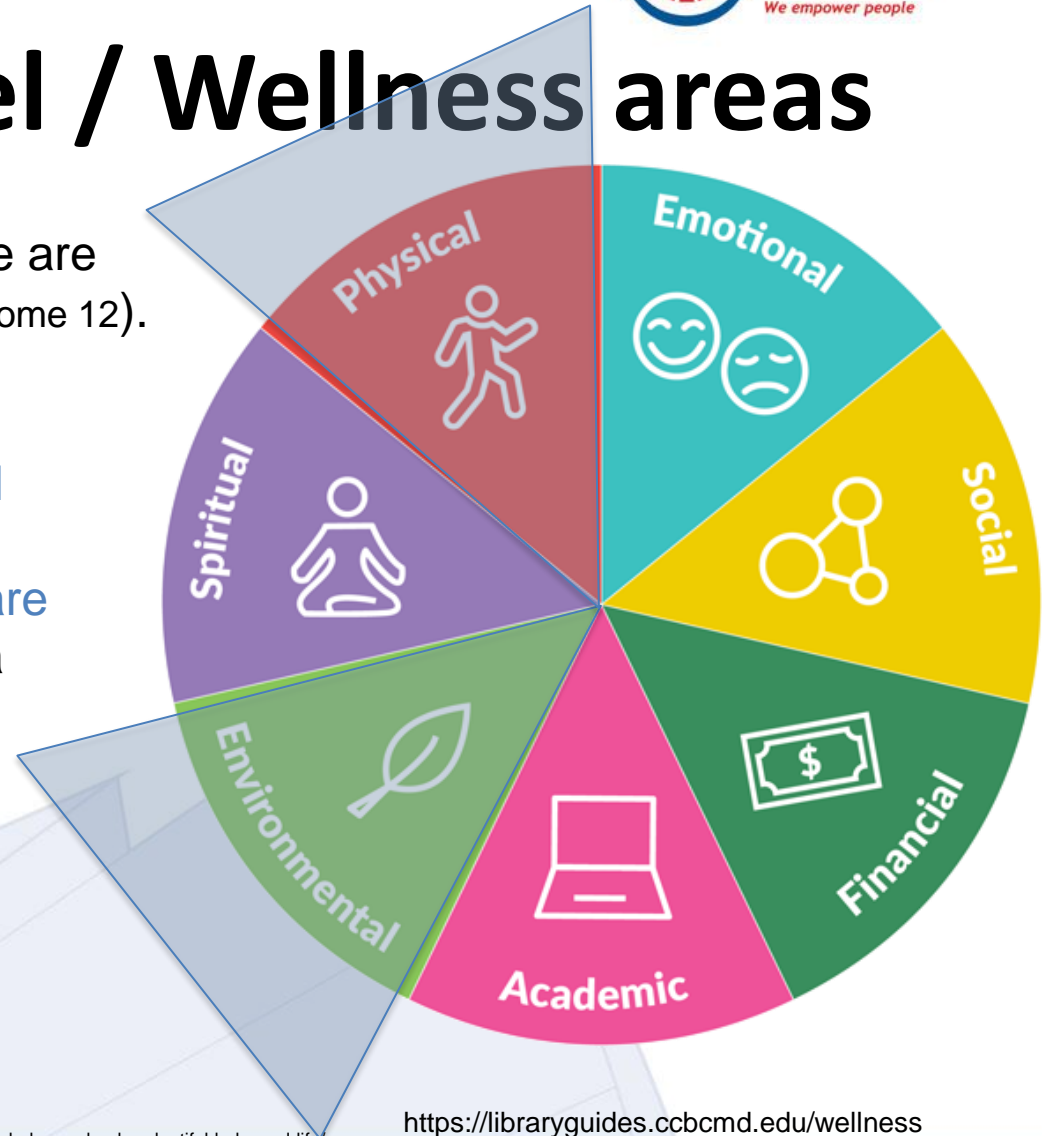


Wellness wheel / Wellness areas

The wellness wheel has evolved, and most experts agree now that there are 7 key dimensions to wellness (some 9 some 12). These **dimensions are interconnected** and all contribute to healthy living. The wellness wheel is a **holistic model** that can help individuals **enrich their lives** by enabling them to **become aware** of and make choices that will lead to a more **successful existence**.

Although all is not your preference – it is the awareness of a balanced approach to “wellness”

NB: The yare related, intertwined





Environmental and physical Wellness

- **Environmental Wellness**

The ability to recognize your own responsibility in the quality of the air, the water and the land that surrounds us. The ability to make a positive impact on the quality of the environment, be it our homes, community or planet.

- **Physical Wellness**

The ability to maintain a healthy quality lifestyle without undue fatigue or physical stress. The ability to recognize that our behaviour have significant impact on our wellness and adopting healthy habits while avoiding destructive habits will lead to optimal physical wellbeing.





Multiple Intelligences – Learning Styles

The term *learning styles or intelligences* is generally used to describe how people prefer to gather, examine, interpret, organize, come to conclusions about, and “store” information for further use.

- Linguistic intelligence (“word smart”)
- Logical-mathematical intelligence (“number/reasoning smart”)
- Spatial intelligence (“picture smart”)
- Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence (“body smart”)**
- Musical intelligence (“music smart”)
- Interpersonal intelligence (“people smart”)
- Intrapersonal intelligence (“self smart”)
- Naturalist intelligence (“nature smart”)**





Naturalist intelligence

- They express a desire to understand how things work.
- They care about the environment and like to be in touch with nature.
- They are aware of their natural surroundings
- They feel a definite sense of connection to the rest of nature
- They are good at identifying fauna and flora.
- They like to explore and discover new species and behaviours.
- They are interested in using tools to help observation — microscopes, binoculars, telescopes —.
- They show an interest in science careers — biology, botany, chemistry, zoology, etc .

<https://www.iberdrola.com/talent/naturalistic-intelligence>





- are very comfortable outdoors
- are aware of their natural surroundings
- feel a definite sense of connection to the rest of nature
- have an affinity for natural habitats such as forests, deserts, oceans/lakes or streams, wetlands
- feel renewed by visiting these natural settings
- discriminate different flora and fauna
- recognize patterns and colours
- are good at sorting and classifying
- have keen observational skills and observe patiently
- feel satisfaction in learning names of flowers, trees, rocks and minerals, dinosaurs, birds, volcanoes, cloud formations, etc.
- enjoy exploring and touching outdoors, including "yucky things"
- understand and can explain natural phenomena
- show a sense for detail, noticing and delighting in the smallest of nature's gifts
- nurture living things, through gardening or taking care of pets or bringing home stray animals
- set up bird feeders and other feeding stations for animals
- choose to read books and watch programs about animals and ecosystems
- seek music related to nature
- make crafts and projects out of natural materials (using shells, driftwood, plant presses)
- like using equipment to find out more about the natural environment (butterfly nets, water and soil quality testing kits)
- readily follow cyclic patterns in nature such as tides, seasons, moon phases, and climate
- enjoy collections of rocks, leaves, flowers, shells, feathers, etc.
- name zoos, farms, wildlife parks, aquariums and pet stores as "special places" for them
- enjoy recreational activities in the outdoors, such as hiking, rock climbing, cross country skiing, camping, sailing, scuba diving, etc.





Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence

- People with bodily-kinesthetic intelligence can learn more **easily by doing, exploring, and discovering.**
- Kinesthetic learning styled people enjoy school activities such as drawing, modeling, sculpting, drafting, shop, athletics, dance, and hands-on sciences





- You have good muscle memory.
- You do best academically with hands-on learning such as art, science, or shop class.
- You often tap your hands or feet in a constant rhythm when focused.
- You get fidgety sitting in environments that are non-interactive and lecture-based.
- You're slower to grasp concepts explained audibly or visually.
- You're curious and like to explore your environment.
- You learn best by doing.
- You're good with tools.
- You can carry on a detailed conversation when performing a physical task.
- You often grip your pen or pencil tightly and push down hard when you write.
- You find it easier to listen and comprehend when there's interaction.
- You find it easy to mimic the movements and gestures of other people.
- You usually find it easy to learn new dance or aerobic steps.

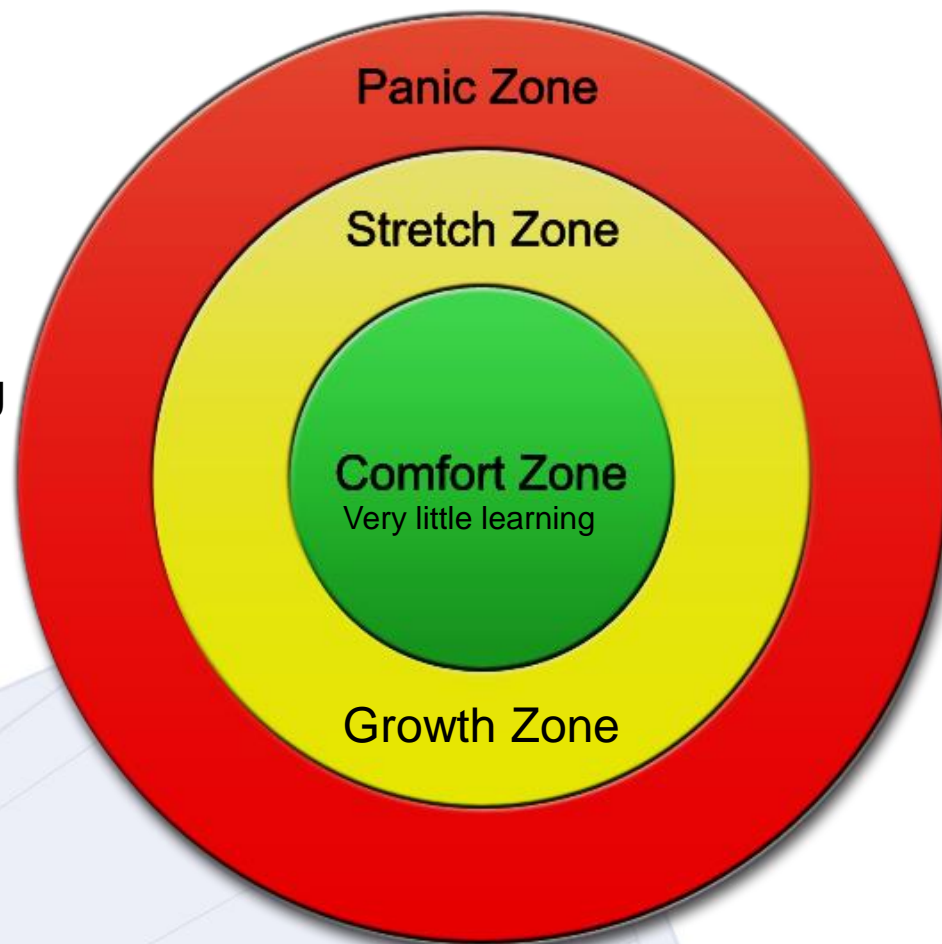




Challenge

The **outdoors** and **being active** is not limited to those in the noted categories only.

It is a constant process of challenging ourselves into **new areas of growth**, realising the **benefits** - all people should have the **desire to explore** amongst others ...
the active and outdoor life.





Research SA Outdoor Industry

- Recent research uncovered the South African Outdoor Recreation Industry (SA ORI) to **contribute R173-billion** (directly) and **R 346 billion (indirectly)** to the South African **GDP** and to **provide 7% directly** (10% indirectly) of all formal jobs in South Africa (Nel, 2019).
- The research also highlighted the universal academic acceptance of the impressive list of benefits outdoor recreation offers for human development and well-being. Despite the socio-economic significance of the ORI, several institutional voids were identified that have thus far prevented this industry from reaching its potential and deserved prominence.

<https://sa-outdoor.org/index.php/about/> (Francois Nel)





Wellness

Outdoor recreation's contribution to **health** can be considered in the context of —**wellness**.

The World Health Organization (2003) defines health as —a state of complete **physical, mental and social well-being** and not merely the absence of **disease or illness**.

This definition moves from a typical strictly medical model of health toward the concept of **well-being**





Health Benefits of Being Outdoors

- Living in comparatively natural areas, viewing nature, and having **outdoor recreation areas and facilities nearby** appear to provide health benefits, just being **close to or in nature**
- That assertion is based on anthropological understanding. **Humans evolved** for a life spent in small groups, hunting and gathering on the plains of Africa – **we are inherently rooted in the Outdoors.**
- Natural selection has not had time to revise our bodies for coping with **fatty diets, automobiles, artificial light, and central heating** – **our lifestyles are NOT healthy.**

[From the work of Geoffrey Godbey](#)





General Health Benefits of Natural Spaces

- Increasing evidence that closeness to the **natural environment is healthy**.
- Living in a **green environment** is positively related to such **health indicators as levels of stress and amount of physical activity**; the relationship between green space and health indicators was somewhat stronger for less educated people.
- One health advantage of being outdoors today is that **being indoors may pose greater dangers, since pollution exposure in homes and offices is often greater than outdoors**.
- When indoors at home, people are more likely to snack and practice **bad health behaviour**. Medium and high TV viewership is associated with snacking more frequently, and frequent viewers also report more consumption of energy-dense snacks (Thomson et al. 2008). Thus, one benefit of outdoor recreation, from a health perspective, is a decreased likelihood of overeating and suffering pollution-related health problems.





Stress and the Natural Environment

- Adults experience adverse health conditions due to acute or chronic stress.
- 75% of all visits to primary care physicians are for stress-related complaints and disorders.
- People with high stress levels are more at risk for the common cold, heart attack, and cancer.
- Stress has also been linked to obesity, high systolic blood pressure, and elevated heart rates.
- Mental stress can decrease blood flow to the heart. Stress is a risk factor for coronary heart disease.
- Migraine headaches, rheumatoid arthritis, chronic fatigue, receptiveness to allergies, and other maladies are also related to stress.
- Stress may both suppress the body's immune system and lead to hormonal imbalances that increase production of abnormal cells.
- Stress is particularly problematic for older adults, since aging is accompanied by physical, psychological, and social changes.
- Some research has shown that too much —artificial stimulation and time spent in purely human environments may cause exhaustion and a loss of vitality and health
- The demands of everyday life—commuting, work, complex decisions— cause mental fatigue, a state characterized by inattentiveness, irritability, and impulsiveness
- That the physical environment can trigger human aggression is well established. Crowding, high temperatures, and noise have all been linked to aggression and violence





- High stress levels are associated with youth violence.
- Some believe that stress produces —**social illness**— **pathological responses such as violent and reckless behavior, crime, or drug abuse.**
- **Antisocial** behavior is a common reaction to stressful life situations.
- **Spending time in nature or even viewing nature appears to reduce stress, however, and thus contact with nature may reduce aggression and violence.**





- **Rejuvenating** effects have been associated with natural settings, including wilderness areas, community parks, and even rooms with houseplants.
- Studies find **speedier recovery time** from **injury** through exposure to **plants or nature**,
- Fewer illnesses in prison inmates whose cell windows face nature, and calming effects of viewing natural landscape images after people are stressed
- Contact with **nature positively affects** blood pressure, cholesterol, outlook on life, stress reduction, and behavioral problems among children





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Currently in SA

- Important to acquire things not experiences
- Paradigms of the “burden of the outdoors”
- The push of technology – social media, gaming
- Cost of services
- Availability of services
- Government's alternative priority, focus or motivation





Bodies that can assist

- Institute of Environment and Recreation Management (IERM)
- Adventure Recreation Institution (ARA)
- Adventure Industry Association (SA AIA)
- Outdoor Industry Association (SA OIA)
- Outdoor and Adventure Institute





“Outdoor Recreation/ Education and the inherent Wellness benefit - has the potential to contribute to a healthy community healthy nation.”





Thank You!

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GODBEY, G. 2009. Outdoor Recreation, Health, and Wellness: Understanding and Enhancing the Relationship. RFF Discussion Paper No. 09-21, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1408694> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1408694>

