

Emotional

Seven Dimensions of Well-Being Spotlight



NATIONAL
RECREATION AND PARK
ASSOCIATION

The Vision

Communities understand, embrace and promote emotional, behavioral and spiritual wellness, and they provide spaces, programs and services that support emotional health. Community members can develop and explore feelings, values and attitudes; practice mindfulness and self-awareness; find a sense of purpose and meaning; and manage emotions and behaviors.

How Parks and Recreation Promotes Emotional Well-Being

Park and recreation agencies support and promote emotional well-being through programs, resources and the spaces they manage. Park and recreation professionals support community members who are experiencing or are impacted by rising rates of mental health conditions, substance use disorder, homelessness or other adversities. Agencies are establishing new practices, programs and services to better support and protect emotional health and connect people to needed mental and behavioral health services.

Examples of Advancing Emotional Well-Being

- Provide mindfulness programming and create accessible, quiet and calming spaces in facilities for mindfulness, meditation and reflection.
- Provide trauma-informed and mental health first aid training to employees, community members and partners.
- Create spaces and opportunities that build a sense of purpose like volunteerism, spending time outdoors and in nature, and community service.
- Collaborate with community coalitions, mental health providers and continuums of care to support people experiencing homelessness, a mental health condition or substance use disorder.
- Assess facilities, operations, policies and communications to reduce stigma, limit noise and sensory overload, and create a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment.
- Partner with mental health providers to offer screenings or design educational programming centered around managing stress and promoting well-being.
- Provide access to the internet, phones, video conferencing or other technology needs.
- Assess how you are supporting the mental health and well-being of your staff and identify actions you can take in alignment with the [Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Well-Being](#).

In Practice

The Stark County Park District in Canton, Ohio, partnered with Stark Mental Health Addiction and Recovery, a local mental health agency, to create a "Mindfulness Walk." The goal was to provide an added benefit to a community that has dealt with an increased number of deaths by suicide. The walk, which features 10 stations, was designed in partnership with mental health professionals; several scout groups and park district staff helped build it. The stations — which include a Zen sand garden, a musical instrument, stacking stones and a labyrinth — promote relaxation, focus, awareness, reflection and embracing the present moment. In addition, a public relations campaign was launched when the walk opened in June 2019, to spread awareness about the walk and its mental health benefits.

Learn More: bit.ly/Stark-In-Practice



Community members celebrate summer during a festival in Berea, Kentucky. Photo courtesy of Grow Appalachia.