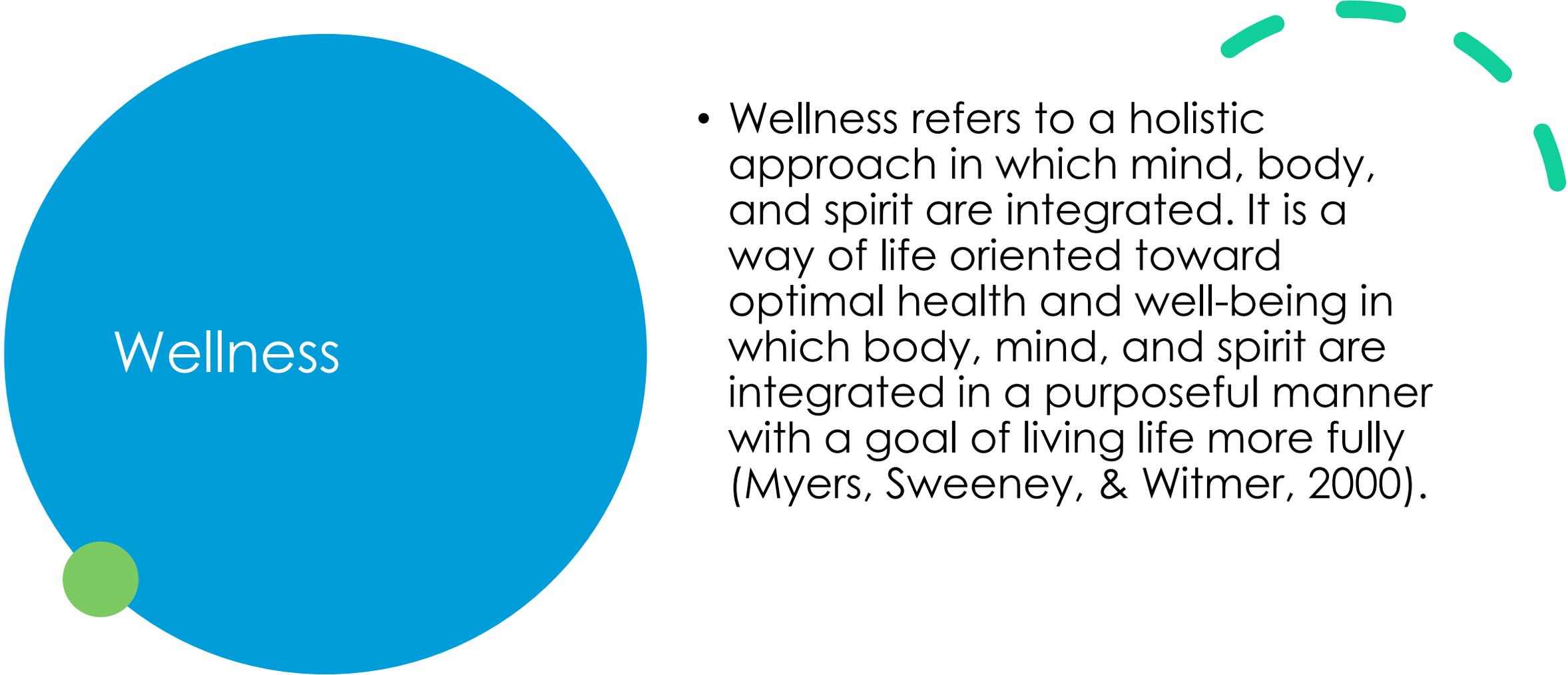




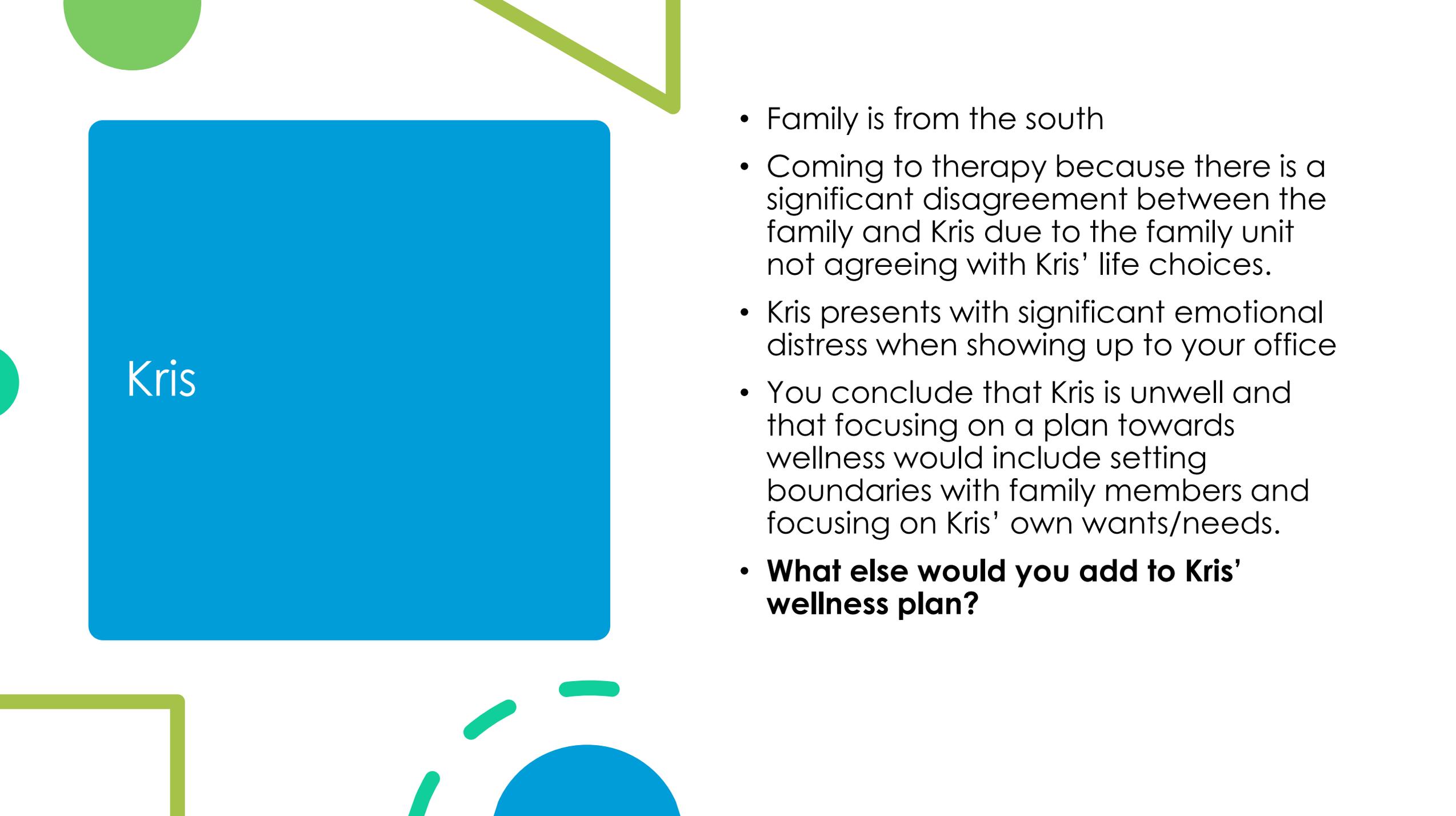
The Intersection of Wellness and Social Justice

Sam Simon, PhD, LCMHC, NCC
(she/they)



Wellness

- Wellness refers to a holistic approach in which mind, body, and spirit are integrated. It is a way of life oriented toward optimal health and well-being in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated in a purposeful manner with a goal of living life more fully (Myers, Sweeney, & Witmer, 2000).



Kris

- Family is from the south
- Coming to therapy because there is a significant disagreement between the family and Kris due to the family unit not agreeing with Kris' life choices.
- Kris presents with significant emotional distress when showing up to your office
- You conclude that Kris is unwell and that focusing on a plan towards wellness would include setting boundaries with family members and focusing on Kris' own wants/needs.
- **What else would you add to Kris' wellness plan?**

THE INDIVISIBLE SELF: An Evidence-Based Model Of Wellness

CONTEXTS:

Local (safety)

Family
Neighborhood
Community

Institutional (policies & laws)

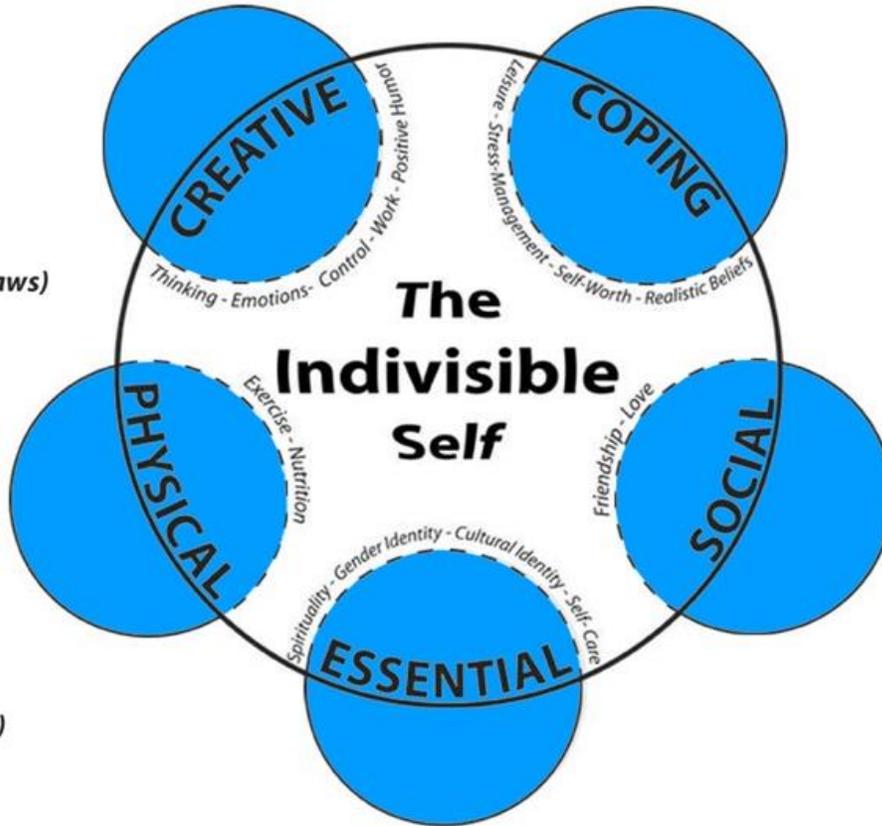
Education
Religion
Government
Business/Industry

Global (world events)

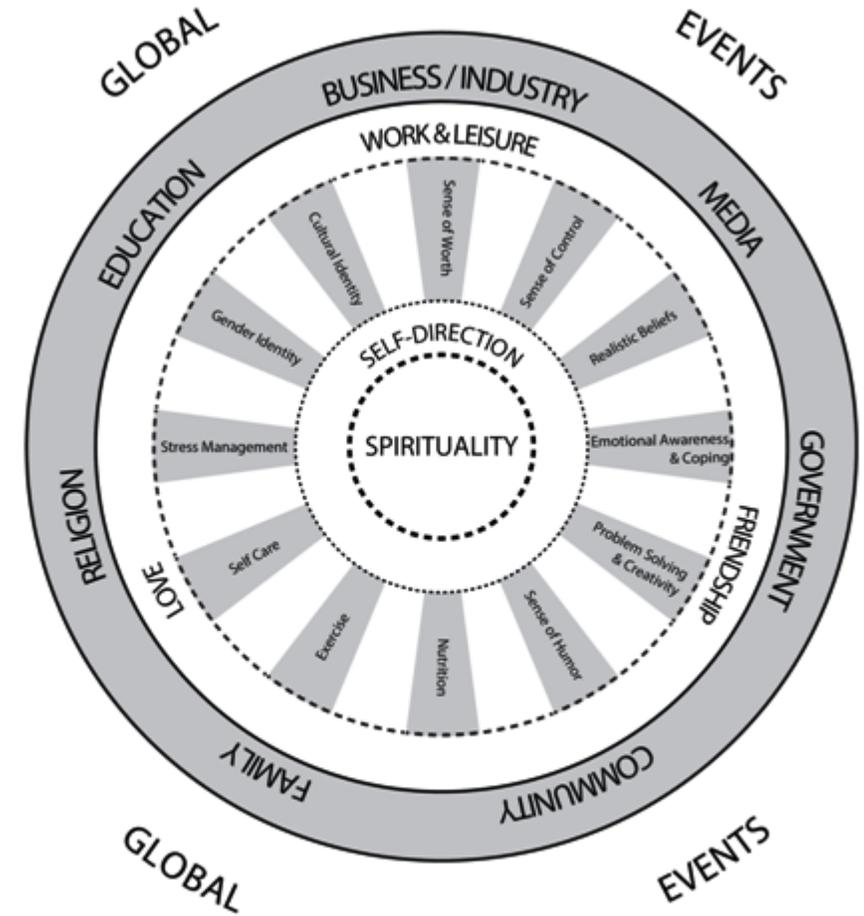
Politics
Culture
Global Events
Environment
Media

Chronometrical (lifespan)

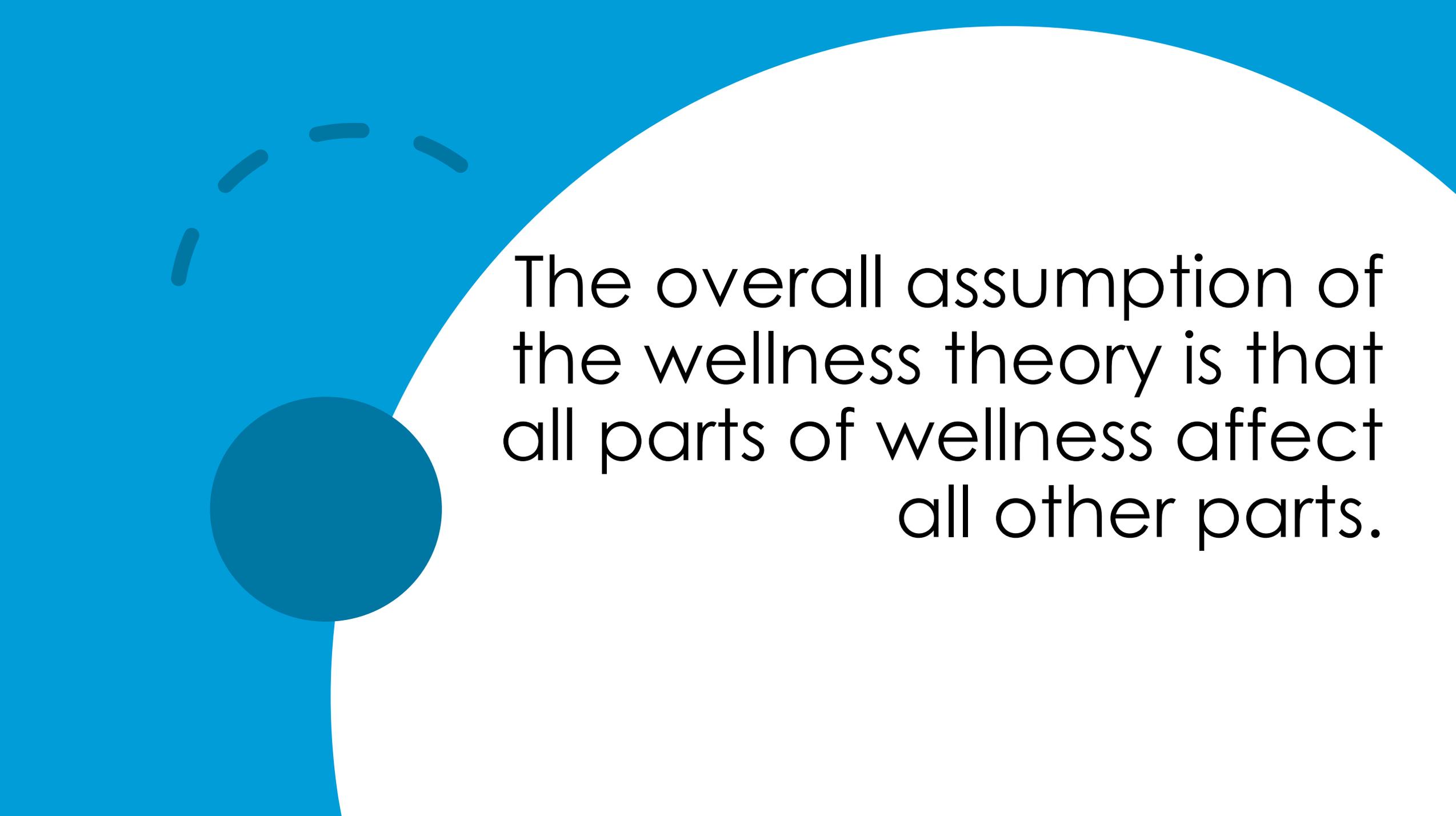
Perpetual
Positive
Purposeful



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© J. M. Witmer, T. J. Sweeney, & J. E. Myers, 1996, reprinted with permission

The background is a solid blue color. A large white semi-circle is positioned at the top right. A dashed blue line, consisting of several short segments, curves from the top left towards the center. A solid dark blue circle is located on the left side, partially overlapping the white semi-circle.

The overall assumption of the wellness theory is that all parts of wellness affect all other parts.

The background features a large blue semi-circle on the left side. To its right, there are several green geometric shapes: a solid circle, a dashed line forming a partial circle, a solid line forming a partial circle, and a solid square. The text is white and positioned within the blue semi-circle.

The idea of **achieving** wellness is a privileged concept (Gamby, Burns, & Forristal, 2021).



Factors of 5F- WEL

- **Gender Identity.** Satisfaction with and feeling supported in one's gender; ability to be androgynous.
- **Cultural Identity.** Satisfaction with and feeling supported in one's cultural identity; cultural assimilation.
- **Self-Care.** Taking responsibility for one's wellness through self-care and safety habits that are preventive in nature.

Factors of 5F-WEL



Physical Self

- **Nutrition.** Eating a nutritionally balanced diet; maintaining a normal weight (within 15% of the ideal).
- **Exercise.** Engaging in sufficient physical activity through exercise or in one's work to keep in good physical condition.

Special Scales (Experimental)

- **Perceived Safety.** The extent to which you believe you are safe in your home, neighborhood, and community, and the extent to which you feel safe from harm by terrorists.
- **Context.** The extent to which your wellness is influenced, in a conscious manner, by individual, institutional, and global contexts, and the extent to which you are aware of and intentional in responding positively to changes in wellness over time



Wellness Food for Thought

“The notion that symptom reduction is too narrow to capture the full healing process is not new in the general population. Scholars have defined well-being as the goal for healing through areas of scholarship such as positive psychology (Gable & Haidt, 2005), the concept of posttraumatic growth (Tedeschi, & Calhoun, 2004), and other wellness movements (Myers, 1991). **However, these models have yet to be integrated into the evaluation of programs, let alone to programs attempting culturally relevant work...**” (Hargrove, 2022, p. 38)

“wellness is steeped in **resistance** and their perspective of wellness is holistic...” (Hargrove, 2022, p.14)

“**When symptom reduction is the goal, we risk defining wellbeing in a way that misses the heart of what matters to Black women, or even perpetuates their oppression by suggesting any failure to heal is their own fault.** Black women navigating the healing process within a racist society deserve more from mental health service providers. In order to effectively treat Black women survivors of trauma, it is necessary to go beyond White norms and instead develop models where Black women are at the center from inception” (Hargrove, 2022, p.15)



Introducing Liberation Psychology

Liberation psychology refers to the use of psychological approaches to understand and address oppression among individuals and groups (Comas-Diaz & Rivera, 2020).

Foster personal and collective agency by encouraging people to make things happen, as opposed to having things happen to them.

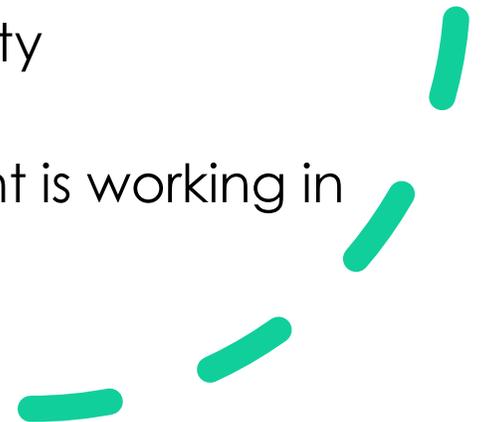
Empowerment belief that everyone, regardless of intelligence, ability, or talent, needs to engage in the world to survive and help to transform it.

Engage in radical humility

Bottom-up method of understanding wellness and oppression

Think of a client where there were inhibiting factors for their “optimal” wellness...

- Would their mental health impairment have lessened by having the following privilege:
 - More money
 - More power
 - More control
 - Adequate housing
 - Adequate/sustaining food
 - Safe housing
 - Ability to walk
 - Ability to be safe from discrimination at work
 - Ability to get affordable gender-affirming surgery
 - Ability to see themselves represented in media
 - Their body size accepted by society
 - Ability to get medical care
 - Trust government/law enforcement is working in their best interest



What can we do?

Study the wellness factors WITH multiple cultures

Create culturally relevant wellness scales/assessments

Create/explore wellness for systemic change (organizational wellness assessments)

Allow for input on what wellness means to each person

Use counseling wellness models as guidelines, not as fact

Testimonio- a liberation psychology narrative approach in which individuals account their experiences with oppression, trauma, and marginalization (Comas-Diaz & Rivera, 2020).

• **HEAL before WELL**

Resources

- Well for Culture: <https://www.wellforculture.com/>
- Native Wellness: <https://www.nativewellness.com/>
- The Black Emotional & Mental Health Collective (BEAM): <https://beam.community/>
- The Audre Lorde Project: <https://alp.org/>
- Folx Healthcare: <https://www.folxhealth.com/>

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