



At Saint Leo University, in Florida, Choosing Wellness is both a lifestyle and a required general education course. Offered through the School of Education and Social Services Education Department, this proactive course engages students in taking responsibility for their optimal health and vitality while advancing essential skills such as goal-setting, decision-making, critical thinking, information literacy, and respectful collaboration. Supporting the university's goal of balanced mind, body, and spirit, Choosing Wellness encourages students to make life-long wellness their informed priority, by applying health education content through general education skill sets.

To accomplish this, a wide variety of learning activities target modifiable risk factors, help students identify their personal health risks, examine their current behaviors, and implement strategies to optimize their wellness. One major assignment is a three phase wellness behavior change project; the Personal Wellness Plan. Centering on nutrition, fitness, sleep, smoking cessation, or spirituality, students work towards setting, tracking, and achieving a SMART goal towards improved behavior in the selected focus area. They learn to plan for and minimize challenges, establish support systems and rewards, and record/review progress data to discover themes and patterns that may also encourage success with future goals.

Next, students identify achievements and corresponding implications, select evidence-based information to corroborate their findings, reflect, and set a future wellness goal.

For instructor and student convenience, course assignments/rubrics and ancillary materials are housed in the LMS (LearningStudio). Each learning activity and assignment is designed to help students become thoughtful consumers of health information, critically analyze problems, issues, and successful practices surrounding their wellness, and make informed health decisions. Our students create infographics and videos, conduct and present research, design and direct collaborative activities, present website and app reviews, and write reflections centering on important topics in the 9 Dimensions of Wellness. Each engages students in relevant study and practices towards improved wellness of mind/body/spirit supported by transferable general education skillsets.

Now entering its third year, Choosing Wellness has met great success. Given the dynamic nature of health education, conventional wisdom will change, and the course will evolve, but essential soft skills developed through this course will continue to inform lifelong wellness.

Choosing Wellness course designer

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