Finding Balance
Nate Bock l April 24, 2020

Episode Description:

Nate Bock, Assistant Director of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), talks about using the eight areas of wellness to balance your day. Those areas of wellness are environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, spiritual and emotional.

Transcript:

Hello, and welcome again. I originally did a video where I talked about spending some time balancing schedule, that that can be really helpful in change and I wanted to do a follow-up video to talk a little bit more about what that might look like. We have a model at UNO that we use that I think would be a fantastic way of throwing in what balance might look like on a daily basis and I think we talk a lot about creating schedules from one moment forward but I think this also gives a chance especially as we've been in this situation long enough where we've had days that have been put together, we can use this model and look backwards to from kind of a, use kind of an epidemiological approach and ask ourselves, what has been missing in our days and how we've noticed it and you know, and then take a look at what we can do moving forward and what we need to do to just better balance our day and what works for us.

So, I am going to use the areas of wellness that we use at UNO to kind of go through what daily balance can look like and I'm going to be glancing at a computer screen as we go, just to make sure that I don't forget any of the areas. I know them fairly well, it’s just when you're talking towards them it's easy to forget one of them and I certainly do not want to forget any of them.

So, as we look at our days and thinking about, did I feed all of these areas? And how much so on a daily basis, I think we're going to get some flexibility from day-to-day of how much time we might spend on each of these areas. But as we look at each day and you know, a couple days at a time, having some realization that I am touching on these areas, and areas in ways that work for me.

So, if we talk about one of the first areas of wellness- I’m going to bring up is the environmental and this area is usually impacted right now. This is probably one of the larger areas of change that we've been through and so, to be able to add that back into our day appropriately, I think we have to think about, what does this look like now? And
it might be- how does it look like in a different way and I think this is one we have to think about maybe in different ways as our work environment has very much changed. Our environmental community involvement has changed.

So, I think of this one in ways of being able to reframe what it is that we’re doing and that if I’m not getting as much contact with others or getting out into the community and my environmental wellness area has changed so much, I’m going to reframe that thinking- I'm doing something for our environment right now and I'm doing my part to have less interaction- I guess would be a good way of thinking about it- with others and it helps me feel better about contributing to you know, that area of wellness within environmental. That's a way that I'm able to contribute right now and that's making our environment better right now- instead of getting into the well I can't do this, and I can't do this and this is change and I don't like it this way, I think we can reframe it to think about- I'm contributing in a positive way by pulling away from some of these interactions.

I think financial is another one that’s at the top of the list that’s been a huge impact for some, and so the financial area of wellness, there’s some who have lost jobs and, or gotten restricted hours and this is a really hard area of wellness for many, many people right now and it might be awhile before that comes back so, to get some more control back in this area- we might not have control over whether an employer had cut our jobs or cut the hours back but we can spend some time sitting down and laying out what it might look like and thinking about who may be able to help and what community resources might be out there, because it comes back to what do I have control over this area right now and spending some time with it because I think one of the things that we do in these areas when things become very, very stressful and we lose control is, we start to avoid. And what we don't know, sometimes becomes more stressful than if we sat down, spent some time and got the reality of it and what it is that we do know. It's a very difficult one right now for many and I think for those of us that are in a spot where this one isn’t as stressful, to be able to identify again, feeling better about our environment, to be able to use some of the resources we have to maybe help out others.

The intellectual area of wellness, this sometimes gets addressed through work, but I think it’s also one of those areas of like, what’s an extra hobby we have? And I think as we’re limited to you know, maybe our environment at home, that there’s those days- a year ago, 3 years ago that we wondered about- I’ve always really wanted to learn more about this certain area or- excuse me, wanted to do something specific you know, I wanted to learn to cook this type of food or I wanted to learn how to build this or I want to know how this works. And this is a good time to do that because most of the time, when we think about those things- when we thought about them a year ago was, if I just had the time. And so, thinking about if there is time to do things like that you know, to be able to put those in. I think you know, it’s a little boring to just kind of go through things and say this is how you structure a day and here’s some concepts to have thought
about and doing so. But I think the big picture is, are we waiting with all these changes? Or are we living. And I think if we can you know, take the situation that it is and do everything we can to live- given what is going on around us, I think that's a good example of that intellectual- is that it you know, this gives me the opportunity to live something and I wasn't able to and maybe life was going in a different direction or it was busy, or that type of thing.

Occupational wellness area, what we're talking about here is you know, how much we're able to spend time with the work world and professional world and this has been a big change too, I think for many of us we're a couple weeks in for most of us and the changes have been made in place for working remotely and starting to get into a little bit of groove there and I think there's lots of challenges that go along with us for many and the challenges are different for everybody. I think also paying attention to the positives in this would be, what have I been able to accomplish in these changes and how are they going and paying attention to- I was able to do this and make it work in some way. Now, there's going to be a lot of things that probably aren't perfect you know, the first week was really rough for me, I've got two children and my wife's working from home, a new puppy- we thought that would be a good idea- I've heard a lot of people have done that, it actually has worked out well.

However, it was a lot to manage and I think for all of us, we have those different challenges and it takes a while to kind of get back in the groove- is it the same as when I was able to go into the office? No. However, I can look back and be able to identify the successes that have happened in the changes that have been made, to feel good about that occupational area right now.

The physical- taking care of ourselves physically, this is different for everyone but make sure that we're putting some of that practice in our day. If we can go for walks, if we have any ability to do any other physical activity within our home, it might be doing things while we're working on the computer where we're standing up more. I think another thing- physical right now that is really, really hard that's been impacting me a lot is being home- is walking by that refrigerator throughout the day. More so than, you know, most of us do at the office so really having to be careful about how much that refrigerator then gets open. And then, also, making sure that I get the exercise that I need you know, whether it's at the end of the day or the beginning of the day, what's that going to look like and when is it going to look like. If you take a look at stress, physical exercise is one of the best ways to reduce stress. It's right up there with counseling, it's right up there with psychotropic medications so I really encourage that one, it's highly important especially in times of stress.

On the social side of things, this has changed quite a bit too, what does that look like now? It probably doesn't look the same, and how do we structure it in a day. And just because we can't meet up with people from a physical sense, it doesn't mean we avoid it altogether and it might mean that we are checking in during Zoom, it might not feel the
same, or talking to neighbors across the street, it might mean- I've heard a lot of ideas that people are doing here and I think there's a lot to be found in talking to others and what is working for them and reading articles that are out there because this is a human basic need and finding out how people are finding a way to do this.

Spiritual is another wellness area. Spiritual is, kind of that sense of, that there's something bigger out there and I used to get a very spiritual feeling- I still do I don't get up and do this as often as I used to, but I used to on Sunday mornings go up or go out and go running at 6:30 in the morning and on Sunday morning at 6:30, there's not a lot of people out and I imagine that's fairly similar to what's going to be going on right now in our environment at 6:30 in the morning. The sun's coming up, it's starting to peek through the trees and it's just a very, very peaceful time feeling like I was part of something bigger, it was a very spiritual feeling. Some of us get this from religion and the spiritual side of that. However spiritual fits into your life, it's important to take a look at- how am I getting that on a daily basis? How much time am I giving it? Instead of taking a look at, well I'm not able to do it maybe the way I was before so I'm going to not have that in my day. It's going to be important for all of us to find that too.

The last one I was talking about, I want to talk about- I saved this one for last, is the emotional. I saved it for last because I do believe that emotional wellness has a lot to do with a lot of those other areas of wellness and if we're taking care of those other areas of wellness, that the emotional seems to be in a better place. But this also might be a time, if the stressors have become to compile and that you have family members that are struggling or maybe you're sick or stress demands have gotten high enough- we need to take care of that too and what would that mean and sometimes our capacity to handle stress and some of these environmental situations that are going on, just get greater than ourselves and we need to involve somebody else that's professional in this area so I encourage you to reach out to someone in the community- mental health providers, we give referrals in our office for faculty, staff and for students we offer those services so please give us a call if we can help out in any of the ways I previously mentioned in those areas. So I hope this is helpful, please look back at your schedules and think about the area's I went through to see if they're present in your days, as you're planning your day's think about how to put them in your day, and how they might need to change but be able to identify ways that they'll be there and hopefully you're able to find those levels of balance that can be so important. Talk to you soon, thank you.