

Wellness Tool Box Across Cultures

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Wellness Toolbox includes tool, strategies, skills, and cultural healing techniques and activities that people use to keep themselves well in a daily basis as well as those that are used frequently or occasionally. Below are some examples of wellness tool box across cultures.

African drumming: participating in hand drumming with a group of people enables a person to feel a sense of connection and bond which is good for emotional health since we are social beings. Drumming empowers the mind, the body, and the spirit through the rhythm of the drums and is a tool to remove tension and emotional blockages. African drumming circle became popular all over America; most communities have a drumming circle gathering at local parks, churches, and at people's houses.

Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdN6olQXHyo>

For more information: <http://drumjourney.com/>

“The drum has been used for healing purposes throughout the world for thousands of years, in tribal societies with their shamanic traditions to communicate with the spirit world, as well as a tool for social integration and to restore harmony. According to West African wisdom teachings, emotional disturbance manifests as an irregular rhythm that blocks the vital physical energy flow. As regular even rhythms are regarded as a sign of health, these rhythms can heal the person by touching him or her in an immediate and powerful way, removing blockages and releasing tension. Thus dance and drumming serve as preventive remedies, and they help people to become more aware and balanced.

According to current medical research, stress is a cause of 98% of all disease. Not only heart attacks, strokes, immune system breakdowns, but every disease known, with the exception of two viruses, has now been linked to stress. Recent biofeedback studies show that drumming along with our own heartbeats for 15 minutes alters brainwave patterns (increasing alpha) and dramatically reduces stress. So drumming actually "meditates" us!”

Arthur Hall states:

“When you take your drum to a rhythm circle and play it with your community, healing happens. It does not matter if the group's focus is purely social or ritualistic. If you come and drum, the healing is compounded because everyone is putting their spirit into their drum, and their hearts are open. You get and give a rhythmical massage that is compounded by the number of people in the circle and the energy they are sharing with each other.”

David Joannes states:

A circle has no beginning and no end. In a circle all points are equal. In a drum circle all players are equal, regardless of musical ability. The energy from each player travels through the circle; the energy transmitted as rhythmic vibration, and is supported by the intention and spirit of each person. The instruments played may have originated from many cultures and traditions, many leading back in time to the tribal roots of African drumming.

Each percussion instrument resonates with its own specific vibration; the bells and shakers speaking to

the higher chakras and the deep drums to the lower chakras. The group vibration speaks beyond conscious thought, deep into each person's subconscious, into their bodies, and into their souls. When the pulse succeeds in creating entrainment amongst the players, the circle is intimately connected beyond words or logic. A sense of oneness, and pure joy may occur. A connection to being part of the human race may occur. A connection to mother Earth may occur.

This healing shift of consciousness occurs according to the willingness of each participant to be lost in the rhythm, yet not losing awareness of the rhythm. To reach this place one must let go of any thoughts of judging their playing or the playing of others, or any perception of being judged. A place where ego and every day concerns cease to exist. That is the magic of the drum circle.

Qi gong: is moving meditation. There are many types and forms of qi gong. Qi gong is an integrated mind-body healing method practiced in China for thousands of years for healing and preventing diseases. More recently, Qi gong has been integrated in medical care to assist with healing from cancer, immune system disorders, chronic illness, anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges. Qi (pronounce "chee") is energy flowing in the body. In Chinese medicine, when the Qi flows without stagnation in the body then the body heals and stay healthy.

Video: Sheng Zhen Healing Qi Gong with Master Li

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p12vknxpz_o&feature=related

For more information: http://www.shengzhen.org/the_natural_state.htm

<http://www.qigonghealing.com/qigong/whatis.html>

Book: The Way of Qigong, the Art and Science of Chinese Energy Healing by Kenneth Cohen

Kirtan chanting: many people use chanting to maintain their wellness and spirit. Kirtan chanting is popular among people who practice among the yoga community and has its origin in India. Kirtan involves chanting hymns or mantras to musical instruments such as the harmonium, the two-headed mrdanga or pakawaj drum, and karatal hand cymbals.

For more information: <http://www.raganiworld.com/kirtan.html>

Ragani World website states that:

“Kirtan (yoga chant) is a participatory, cross-cultural music experience that incorporates the audience right into the performance. These ancient chants contain powerful healing and transformational energies that serve to reconnect us to the Ever-present and Eternal Being that lies within us all. Although the language of kirtan is often in Sanskrit, the true language of kirtan is universal, because it is a language of the heart.

By chanting the different names and aspects of the divine, by calling out to the divine, we naturally reflect upon and call forth that divinity that exists within us all. Indeed, this call-response style chanting (kirtan) is a means of finding our way back to the core of our being, to our heart, and to our connection to each other. Truly, kirtan is for everyone--there are no prerequisites, no religious beliefs or cultural backgrounds that are needed to experience and participate in kirtan.”

Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SykTSrQxJk>

Dance forms across culture: dancing is a powerful wellness and healing tool across different cultures from African dance to Native American Pow Wow, Sweat Your Prayers, Sufi Whirling Dance, Chinese Dragon Dance, and many other forms of dance. The rhythm and movement of the body during dance enhances wellness and healing. Dances also enhance spiritual connections.

African Healing Dance with Wyoma

<http://www.wyomadance.com/programs4.html>

“Wyoma works to inspire creative problem-solving, increase body awareness, improve muscle tone and flexibility, rejuvenate, empower, and heal individuals through African dance.”

“In Africa, dance is much more than physical movement - it is a direct way to celebrate life and create healing. African Healing Dance is a step-by-step course on the healing tradition and expressive movements that are unique to Africa's dance heritage. From the movements of nature and everyday life, the tribal people of Africa developed specific dances to summon the energy of the world around them into their bodies for connection and healing. Through dancing, they became the bird and the wind, the fire and the serpent.” Wyoma

Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkLoDhSrVKc>

Native American Pow Wow Dance

Native American Pow Wow dance is a very spiritual experience whether you are watching it or participating in the dance. The dance step and its rhythm calms the mind and body whether a person dance at home or dress up in a Pow Wow dance ceremony. The Native American chanting while doing the pow wow dance connects the person to the spirit. To many people, the Pow Wow Dance is a powerful wellness tool whether dancing in the living room or at a ceremony.

For more information: <http://www.powwows.com/>

Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MF_BA8e14Bw

Sufi whirling dance is a dance originated among Sufis. According to Wikipedia: “It is a customary dance performed within the Sema, or worship ceremony, through which dervishes (also called semazens) aim to reach the source of all perfection, or kemal. This is sought through abandoning one's nafs, egos or personal desires, by listening to the music, focusing on God, and spinning one's body in repetitive circles, which has been seen as a symbolic imitation of planets in the Solar System orbiting the sun.”

For more information: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sufi_dance

Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jeca3isOoW4>

Meditation: is about training the mind to be in the present by having self-regulation of attention by

being in the here and now. Meditation is cross-cultural with every major religions having some sort of meditation whether it is by observing the breath or saying a mantra or a prayer. Through meditation, the mind becomes calm and then the body also becomes calm. By practicing meditation, we are able to move closer to our thoughts and emotions and to get in touch with our bodies.

Susie Harrington states that “This awareness leads us to accept more fully the pleasure and pain, fear and joy, sadness and happiness that life inevitably brings. Training our minds allows us to be more present for all aspect of our lives. It is a method of cultivating open heartedness towards ourselves, and others.

Mindfulness meditation is one type of popular meditation that is simple by focusing on the breath and being present. Other types of meditation includes Tibetan mantra meditation, Medicine Buddha mediation, visualization meditation, etc.

For more information: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meditation>

Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nwwKbM_vJc

The following is a list of other types of wellness tools across cultures:

Sweat lodge: sweating for detoxification and spiritual connections in Native American culture; for people who don't have access to sweat lodge ceremony then sweating at a spa also helps with detoxification.

For more information: <http://www.barefootworld.net/sweatlodge.html>

Breathwork – different types of breathing exercise to calm the mind, body, and spirit. Wonderful wellness tool for anxiety and hyperactivity.

For more information: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breathwork>

Energy healing such as Reiki (Japanese hands on energy healing using universal life force), Qi Gong Healing (external transferring of energy from one person to another), Quantum Touch, etc.

For more information: http://healing.about.com/od/energyhealing/Energy_Healing.htm

Toltec teaching of Miguel Ruiz and the Four Agreements:

For more information: <http://www.miguelruiz.com/>

Curanderismo- Traditional Mexican American Healing

For more information: <http://www.sci-therapies.info/Indigenous.htm>

Acupressure: an ancient healing art that uses the fingers to press key points on the surface of the skin to stimulate the body's natural self-curative abilities.

For more information: <http://www.acupressure.com/articles/introacu.htm>

Acupuncture

Homeopathic Treatment

Sound healing using tuning forks

Listening to cultural music

Cooking ethnic food and joy of cooking

Yoga

Fasting

Volunteer Work or Seva, self-less service

Eating ethnic meals together

Cultural and social activities

Shamanism

Native American vision quest

Tai Chi

Aikido