



RESOURCES & ACTIVITIES GUIDE



Welcome!

Welcome to SOfit, and thank you for taking steps not only to help others live happier, healthier lives, but also to invest in your own wellness. Wellness is a personal, intimate process and should be approached with patience, resolve and understanding. The decision to put time into wellness is for ourselves and for our loved ones. Truly it is a responsibility to take care of our health, but that doesn't mean it has to be done alone.

Wellness is a holistic view of health, encompassing all four of the identified pillars of SOfit – Physical, Emotional, Social and Nutritional. These pillars of wellness work together; there's more to being healthy than exercise and eating well.

This SOfit Resources & Activities Guide we hope will provide a good base and structure to what you can do within your program. The SOfit funds can be used for equipment, supplies and instructors to help support the lessons in each pillar.

If your organization is interested in the full lesson and curriculum guide please contact Special Olympics Minnesota at info@somn.org

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Emotional Wellness



According to the National Institutes of Health, emotional wellness is the ability to successfully handle life's stresses and adapt to change and difficult times. The SOfit Emotional Wellness pillar will help guide you through activities that can help with stress, adapting to change, how to handle difficult situations and goal setting.

Learn about Emotional Wellness through a variety of different activities and resources:



**Group
Activities**



**Instructor-led
Activities**



**Resources &
Equipment**

Emotional Wellness Topics:

Healthy Expression of Emotions

Stress Management

Mindfulness: The Art of Being Present

Relaxation and Breathing Techniques

Goal Setting

Decision-Making

Healthy Self-Esteem



Group Activity: Healthy Expressions of Emotions

What are healthy expressions of emotions? The way people express emotions can impact relationships with others or ourselves. Learn to identify and express feelings in a healthy way without hurting yourself or others.

ACTIVITY:

Brainstorm a list of feelings with the group and write them on a whiteboard or poster paper.

Ask a volunteer to come to the front and act out one of the feeling words listed on the board. Give the group three guesses. If the group hasn't guessed correctly after three tries, have the actor reveal the feeling.

Allow others to take turns acting out the feeling words listed on the board. Ask the group how to find out what a person is feeling - and the danger of assuming you know what someone else feels.

Group Activity: Stress Management

What is stress? Stress is your body's response to events happening around you and is an everyday experience felt by all people at all ages.

Stress creates an imbalance of the chemicals in the brain. As a response, the brain releases or prohibits certain hormones and different chemicals that cause people to think, act, and feel differently. Stress can cause us to have mental stresses (brain fog, fatigue, moodiness, easily angered or saddened, difficulty interacting with others, anxiety) and physical stresses (difficulty sleeping, weight gain, lowered immune function, tense muscles or aches, upset stomach).

ACTIVITY:

What are some positive ways to manage stress? Brainstorm ideas for activities that participants can do to take care of themselves if they are overwhelmed or stressed and make a list on the whiteboard or poster paper.

Encourage participants to write down the ways that work best for them to positively manage stress and save that list so they can use it when they feel stressed out.

Other group activities?

We recommend using any of the Emotional Wellness topics as a starting point for small group conversations, brainstorming and individual goal setting and action plan writing. There's no right way or wrong way to explore the Emotional Wellness topics! ***If you are interested in the full SOfit lesson and curriculum guide that includes more group activities, please contact Special Olympics Minnesota at info@somn.org.***



Instructor-Led Activities

Schedule a wellness coach, life coach, mental health professional or relaxation specialist to meet with your group.

Potential topics that could be discussed include:

Stress & Anxiety
Healthy Emotions
Mindfulness, Relaxation & Breathing
Goal Setting
Decision Making



Resources & Equipment

SOfit funds can be used to purchase supplies and equipment that can help improve emotional wellness.

Potential resources & equipment that can be used for lessons and activities:

Relaxation, Mindfulness & Calming Apps
Stress balls
Personal Calendars for goal setting
Technology for sleeping better (white noise machine)

Want to purchase other items not on this list? Please check with Special Olympics Minnesota first.



Nutritional Wellness

Nutrition is one of the most important parts of our health. The food and drink we put into our bodies impacts how we think, feel and behave. It's a challenge to eat and drink in a balanced way to get the nutrients our bodies need. We can meet the challenge if we understand what healthy eating is and have access to a healthy variety of foods.

Learn about Nutritional Wellness through a variety of different activities and resources:



**Group
Activities**



**Instructor-led
Activities**



**Resources &
Equipment**

Nutritional Wellness Topics:

- What's in My Food?
- Preparing Balanced Meals for the Week
- Balanced Eating on the Run
- Hunger or Appetite
- Where Does My Food Come From?
- Understanding Beverage Choices Caffeine
- Alcoholic Beverages



Group Activity: Preparing Balanced Meals for the Week

Why is it important to prepare balanced meals? Meal planning is a good way to start making balanced food choices. It can help you guarantee a balanced plan that includes all the essential nutrients to provide enough energy for your mind and body. It's easier to make balanced decisions when you have a variety of nutrient rich options planned ahead and readily available.

ACTIVITY:

Learn how to put together a balanced weekly plan using a rainbow meal guide. Have participants write a list of their favorite foods, snacks and meals. Using that list that each participant created have them create a 7 day meal plan. List each day on top of a piece of paper with a breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack included for that day. Color code the foods to make sure there is balance.

- Red: Fruits
- Green: Vegetables
- Orange: Grains
- Blue: Dairy
- Purple: Meats and protein

Emphasize the importance of seeing a rainbow of foods every day and in every meal. If they do not have a rainbow of colors they should consider adding a different food to help balance things out.

Group Activity: Balanced Eating on the Run or Dining Out

Why is it important to know what you are eating at a restaurant? When you're on the go or at a restaurant, sometimes it's hard to make balanced decisions. The main thing to remember is to be mindful of what you may be eating and if you are maintaining balance in essential nutrients.

If you have to stop at a fast food restaurant, you can still make balanced choices with nutrient dense foods. Things to consider when ordering at a fast food restaurant:

- Order a smaller size, which can save you from excess empty calories.
- Add vegetables to your sandwich.
- Choose grilled options instead of fried.
- How about a salad? Use less dressing to make the salad more nutrient dense.
- Beverage? Choose water or a smaller size soda or juice
- Order fruit as a side for a nutrient rich choice.

ACTIVITY:

Print out a fast food menu and discuss as a group. Ask participants to write down a meal they have had in the past from this restaurant. Include an entree, side dish and drink.

Next ask participants to alter the meal in a way to add more essential nutrients and lower saturated fat, sodium and calories. Have participants share their changes to their meal and discuss what those changes mean.

Other group activities?

We recommend using any of the Nutritional Wellness topics as a starting point for small group conversations, brainstorming and individual goal setting and action plan writing. There's no right way or wrong way to explore the Nutritional Wellness topics! ***If you are interested in the full SOfit lesson and curriculum guide that includes more group activities, please contact Special Olympics Minnesota at info@somn.org.***



Instructor-Led Activities

Use SOfit funds to schedule a nutritionist, chef or dietitian to meet with your group.

Potential topics that could be discussed include:

- What's in My Food?
- Making healthy food choices
- How to shop in a grocery store
- Cooking at home
- Understanding Beverage Choices Caffeine
- Alcoholic Beverages



Resources & Equipment

SOfit funds can be used to purchase supplies and equipment that can help improve your Nutritional Wellness.

Potential resources & equipment that can be used for lessons and activities:

- Cooking classes
- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- Cook books
- Healthy foods for meal prep
- Cooking utensils
- Reusable water bottle
- Other items not on this list? Yes, please check with SOMN first



Physical Wellness

An important aspect of wellness is being able to move your body with strength and endurance. Physical wellness is much more than just exercise. Physical wellness is anything and everything having to do with your body. In this pillar we will explore many topics that are important for your body, all being a part of physical wellness.

Learn about Physical Wellness through a variety of different activities and resources.



**Group
Activities**



**Instructor-led
Activities**



**Resources &
Equipment**

Physical Wellness Topics:

- Taking Care of My Body
- Alternative Fitness Options
- Cardiovascular Endurance
- Flexibility
- Muscular Strength and Endurance
- Yoga/Pilates
- Importance of Sleep
- Playing a sport



Physical Wellness Group Activities

Many group activities for Physical Wellness can be done together at your home, class, job or even on your own. These activities can be led by your peers around you or you can bring in a fitness professional to lead a class. The goal is to get active!

A few examples you can do as a group:

- Stretching/Yoga
- Go on a walk, bike, rollerblade, etc
- Push ups and sit ups
- Swimming
- Play a sport
- Even yard work or house cleaning can help get your heart rate going!

Try having a new person pick and/or lead an activity each week. This will give a leadership opportunity to someone and allow for new activities.



Other group activities?

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Instructor-Led Activities

Use SOfit funds to schedule a fitness instructor, personal trainer, physical education teacher, coach or physical therapist to meet with your group.

Potential topics that could be discussed include:

- Taking Care of My Body
- Alternative Fitness Options
- Cardiovascular Endurance
- Flexibility
- Muscular Strength and Endurance
- Yoga/Pilates
- Importance of Sleep
- Playing a sport (tennis, swimming, basketball, etc)



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Social Wellness

In the Social Wellness pillar, we will learn how to recognize healthy and unhealthy relationships as well as what to do if we are in an unhealthy relationship. We will explore safe and appropriate boundaries, different personality types in our relationships, and social skills to use in our relationships.

Learn about Physical Wellness through a variety of different activities and resources.



**Group
Activities**



**Instructor-led
Activities**



**Resources &
Equipment**

Social Wellness Topics

Healthy Relationships

Social Skills

Safe and Appropriate Boundaries

Bullying, Cyberbullying and Peer Pressure

Internet and Social Media: Safety and Perception



Group activity: Create a Relationship Circle

Are some relationships different than others? Relationships are connections between two or more people. They are a natural and necessary part of life. Within the many different types of relationships, people use different types of touch or affection. Each person is unique. Some people like to have a wide-ranging network of people, while others are more comfortable with a smaller network.



- Start by writing your own name in the middle circle.
- In the “Hug” circle, write the names of people with whom you have the closest relationships. Many people put only a few people in this circle.
- In the “Side Hug” circle, write the names of people who are also very close to you, but not as close as those in the “hug” circle.
- In the “Shake Hands” circle, write the names of people you know well, but who are not your closest friends or family.
- In the “Wave” circle, write the names of people you’re acquainted with but don’t know very well.
- The circle titled “Do Not Touch” includes the rest of the world (strangers, etc.). We do not need to talk to everyone we see on the street.

Remember that all people have different and unique relationships with others. Although it seems natural to include immediate family members like siblings and parents in the “Hug” circle, not all people are comfortable with this, and that’s okay.

** Activity adapted from *Sexuality for All Abilities*, Mad Hatter Wellness, www.sexualityforallabilities.com and used with permission.*

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