Spring into Wellness
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What compels someone to want to help another individual? Is it empathy for a person’s situation? Is it simply approachability? Our desire to help another – whether through charitable activity, volunteering or simply listening to someone who needs to be heard – can vary but the very real effects of supporting another is an important contributor to promoting wellness in people and in communities.

The concept of wellness seems to come through differing mediums – family, friends or community programs. We can get a feeling of support and greater belonging through any of those mediums but if any one of these should falter, the burden increases on the others. We have witnessed several community–based programs closing down through municipal and provincial leadership decisions. We have seen community centres and resource centres closing across the province and the burden to promote wellness has increased on family, friends or other agencies. As the Winnipeg library increases its security measures, the net result have been more people without a place to gather. We see more people simply hanging out in downtown mall food courts because there are fewer safe places to promote community and to feel safe. We have witnessed changes and challenges in accessible transportation. As more people cannot book a Transit Plus ride, for example, non-profits have been subsidizing transportation, an endeavour that is entirely unsustainable.

Charitable and non-profit organizations are no stranger to cutbacks and it seems daily we read about broad-reaching agencies having to scale back services. How can we propagate a feeling of belonging and wellness in the communities of those most vulnerable and marginalized when the resources simply are not there? Family and friends step up to fill the gap but the cost is growing – fatigue, disenfranchisement, disconnection – all very real factors in communities that are separating, floating apart, rather than gathering nearer.

How achievable then is wellness, beyond being an interesting package of ideologies and practices with some pseudoscience to support it? Wellness is in its simplest form helping others to achieve a higher level of independence and well-being and it can be achieved through listening, gathering, supporting and creating newer avenues for persons to truly participate and belong in their communities. It is falling on families and community members to make this a reality. It falls also on government bodies to continue to promote wellness responsibly and to maintain community locations for people to gather and feel safe.

Wellness is not an idea or principle; it is a journey to healthier well-being. We are learning now more than ever that it is a journey rarely made successfully alone. Hopefully the leaders of today and tomorrow realize and embrace this so that no one is forced to walk alone.
Improving Workplace Well-Being
Robert Mitchell

The subject of wellness and better well-being are closely connected to the workplace. In fact, much research has been done in recent years on how the workplace environment has a tremendous impact on employee productivity.

Modern workplaces are learning how to support employees to focus and work more efficiently. In order to achieve this, workers need to feel comfortable, healthy, inspired and undisturbed.

Did you know that the average person spends about 90% of their time indoors? This has further reaching ramifications when we consider the Winnipeg climate and the relative inaccessibility of transport options for the disability community in winter.

With so much of our time spent inside working, it’s essential to understand the various indoor environmental factors that we can optimise to boost cognitive function and performance at the workplace.

Clear the Air to Clear Your Head

Ventilation in office buildings is an important factor, especially considering the ages of some of the buildings in downtown Winnipeg. The ILRC has been in Portage Place since the early 2000s and the building itself predates the formation of great bands such as Crash Test Dummies and the Barenaked Ladies.

Proper ventilation should bring in fresh air from outside to dilute the CO2 generated from workers and any organic chemicals that might be in the air. If a building doesn’t have proper ventilation, diminishing air quality can feel stuffy and cause symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, coughs, and dizziness. The World Health Organization coined the term ‘sick building syndrome’ for the negative health effects associated with time spent in a building.

Poor ventilation and air quality has also been found to result in workers taking more sick leave, higher operational costs, and decreased productivity. One study showed a 101% improvement in cognitive function test scores when workers were in a highly ventilated office with low CO2, compared with when they were in a standard office environment. Many new construction projects focus on proper air circulation as a key factor in selling the property and attracting new tenants.
Proper Ambient Temperature

Office temperature is a highly contentious topic and one that can vary from person to person. Temperature not only impacts our comfort and productivity, but also our health, so it’s no surprise that people have strong opinions. It can be frustrating indeed for employees to manage both fans and heaters to simply moderate the temperature of their working environment when it should truly be a given standard for any landlord or property manager.

Researchers at Cornell University found that when temperatures were low (20°C / 68°F), workers committed 44% more errors and were half as productive as when temperatures were warm (25°C / 77°F). Other research suggests that 22°C (71°F) is the optimum temperature for productive working. Depending on the demographic of the specific office environment, these temperature ranges can vary but, nonetheless, if the office is too cold we can be sluggish, lethargic and prone to making mistakes.

With the advent of newer technologies in temperature moderation such as geothermal heating, many new builds continue to work at maintaining ambient office temperatures in an eco-friendly and sustainable manner.

So What Can We Do?

There are some general suggestions we can explore to enhance worker productivity while managing the office environment, paying careful attention to the three main aspects outlined above:

- Ensure that ventilation systems are maintained properly, pressuring building management to do so.
- Instate a scent and smoke-free policy for the workplace.
- Set the office temperature to 21-22°C (69-71°F) and monitor how people react and perform.
- Survey staff to find out which areas in your office have less consistent temperatures and provide space heaters and fans for individual monitoring.
- Block out as much outdoor noise as possible (traffic, aircraft).
- Control indoor sources of noise such as office equipment and, if possible, provide dedicated quiet spaces for those who need to focus.

Noise Management

Background noise in a busy office environment is a significant factor towards both productivity and well-being. We’ve all experienced moments where background noise was so bad that our work was disrupted and we had to raise our voices to talk with colleagues, consumers, or finish a teleconference in a respectful manner.

With open plan offices becoming increasingly popular, more workers are being exposed to environmental noise which distracts and stresses employees, leading to impaired performance and compromised production. When you consider fire and security alarms going off during working hours or during a training session, it can become very challenging to get things done and remain focussed, engaged and happy at the job.
One Size Fits One
Doug Lockhart

We recently attended a Wellness event put on by our benefits provider. Amongst the energetic drum taps from Drum Café and many stories and entertainers that were there to invigorate, inform and recharge our batteries, I left feeling that this was perhaps not for everyone.

In our journey to wellness, I have found that each person has their own plan for wellness, something we uniquely call our own. There were many take-aways from this event, all intended to build up our overall health. One of the presenters talked about a 5 step plan that involved eating chocolate with at least 85% cocoa, journaling everyday something that you did that had a positive impact on someone else, hug a tree, connect with people you care about and play every day. So that got me thinking about what ILRC does to promote overall wellness?

Thinking from the premise of invigoration, ILRC offers the freedom of sailing through ILRC Able Sail as well as fishing derbies and a day at Fort Whyte annually. For employees of the Centre, we support 1.5 hour healthy lunch breaks Monday, Wednesday and Friday so staff can destress any way they choose. We have gamers, walkers, readers, news hounds; everyone is given the same opportunity to focus on themselves for that extended lunch time. It really is your personal preferences that guide your journey to wellness.

Socially, we offer events in addition to those previously mentioned such as the Wheels of Change Concert at the Forks in July, a great way to connect while being entertained by some great bands. We also offer Peer Support and IL Skills workshops and many training opportunities that promote skills development while connecting with peers. Our web site, Twitter and Facebook accounts also offer a place to be informed and offer your opinion on today’s events. Our Leisure Education Program offers an array of complimentary passes that provide opportunities to participate in the community in a way that you desire while making natural peer connections.

I actually gave the 5 Steps to Wellness a try and got about half way through the chocolate bar, wrote two days of journal notes, have yet to hug a tree, but I have made a point to exercise and play every day. My path to wellness involves my work and connecting with strangers through opportunities that allow me to share my lived experience. I often do that, sandwiched between bike rides to and from work. My days always end in play of some sort (sports to board games with my family) while sharing some comfort food and having inspired
conversations with those I care about. So what works for some may not work for others but I feel I am figuring out my own path to wellness because as I often say... One Size Fits One.

Did You Know?
Chelsey Sommerfield

Get better together is a workshop designed to help Manitobans with ongoing health conditions. The workshop is led by others living with health issues who understand the challenges of managing symptoms, medications and health care needs. Build your confidence to manage better through group support and discussion of topics including healthy eating, physical activity, communication and pain management. The workshop is free and is held online or in-person at various locations throughout the city, and is broken up into six meetings. Take control of your health! Find out more at https://wellnessinstitute.ca/gbt/

St. Matthew’s Maryland Community Ministry has many resources including a drop-in centre, food supplement program, emergency food cupboard, sacred circle, cooking programs, seniors program, nutrition BINGO, artist circle, summer recreation, low cost Christmas store, tax help and pastoral care and referral. The Ministry is located in the Neighourhood Resource Centre in the lower level of the WestEnd Commons (formerly St. Matthew’s Anglican Church) at 365 McGee Street. Use the entrance on McGee St., near the corner of St. Matthew’s Avenue. The drop in is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday afternoons.

Simply Unique is a free swim program Tuesday evenings at the North Centennial Pool. The pool is wheelchair accessible via ramp entry. Wet chair, life jackets and flotation aids are all on site. There is a Hoyer available, but they ask you to bring your own sling. If required, you will need to bring your own support staff. Registration is done on site at 90 Sinclair St. For more information call Linda at 204-589-1248.

With Montana, It Is Love
Krystal Polson

Wellness looks very different for everyone as we all have different interests, likes and dislikes. For my birthday this year, my dad got me the greatest gift in the world: a St. Bernard puppy named Montana. This is something I have wanted for as long as I can remember. Some of you may be wondering how a puppy would improve my overall wellness. Well, I am here to tell you just that!

The last month or so has been extra busy at work and at home so my mental health has been struggling. When I get home I love having 50 pounds of fur running at me giving me kisses, wagging his tail and looking at me like I am the
greatest thing in the world. Nothing beats that. My heart explodes and my worries drift away. Everything that seems so hard suddenly seems like no problem at all. Not only does he help keep my mental health in check, he also helps keep my physical health in check too. Every evening after work I take Montana for a walk. I live very close to St. Boniface Hospital and so we see a lot of people on our walks. I ran into a gentleman who had been visiting his terminally-ill sister at the hospital. He had thanked me for allowing him to pet Montana and said how it gave his day a little joy. This led me to think about all the other people at the hospital who could use some cheering up. So now, when I take Montana for walks, we make sure to walk past the hospital and brighten people’s days. He loves people and to be petted so this is a win-win for everyone.

I believe it’s the little things in life that give you the most joy. Seeing people’s happy faces as they pet Montana makes my day that much better.

Cannabis and Health

Allen Mankewich

On October 17, 2018, it became legal to purchase and consume cannabis and its by-products in Canada. Further legislation is upcoming in the realms of edible cannabis product purchases. While anyone became able to purchase cannabis for recreational use as of that date, there has been a medical cannabis regime that has existed in Canada since 2001.

Under the medical cannabis system, doctors are able to prescribe cannabis for medical use. Although there is not a lot of research on the effects of cannabis on specific medical conditions or disabilities, cannabis has been prescribed for a range of issues, including epilepsy, sleep issues and cannabis’ ability to relieve pain is well-documented.

While anyone can purchase cannabis at a dispensary, those who are approved for medical cannabis are able to claim cannabis as a medical expense on their taxes, and more and more insurance companies allow expenses related to medical cannabis to be claimed under insurance plans. If you purchase recreational cannabis, you are not able to claim it as a medical expense.

There are multiple ways to consume cannabis, such as combusting, vaporizing, use of oils and extracts, and edibles.
Dispensaries that carry recreational cannabis may be able to describe in general terms the effects of cannabis, but a doctor or cannabis clinic is better equipped to provide information about any medical benefits of cannabis, and to learn more about the medical cannabis system.

More information about medical cannabis can be accessed from your medical provider. There are also cannabis clinics located in larger communities that can provide information on medical cannabis.

Wellness and Humour
Natasha Klassen

One thing that I always think about when talking about wellness is the saying that “Laughter is the best medicine.” I know that laughter does not actually cure all ailments but I know personally that when I am down, and hear a joke or see something funny, I always do feel a little bit better.

Scientifically, you can also see different ways that laughter can actually benefit you. In some recent scientific studies, they have found that laughing releases endorphins in your brain which makes you feel good! Laughter is also a great way to create social bonds and build relationships; when you are able to laugh with people you create a connection with that person.

Everyone finds humour in different ways: some people enjoy jokes or puns, some like slap-stick comedy whereas others enjoy sarcasm. Even if we do not all find the same things funny, I know that I find joy when I see someone laughing.

Cha Cha the Comedian is an individual who has been connected with ILRC for a long while and I think he would agree that laughter is the best medicine. Every time that Cha Cha calls me or stops by the office, he always has a new joke to tell.

Cha Cha has shared one of his jokes to encourage us to find humour and laughter in our lives around us. Enjoy!

Mosquitoes
By Cha Cha the Comedian

In Winnipeg, we have so many mosquitoes in the summer time. There were two brothers that were bald, no hair at all. They decided to have lunch together. When they went into the restaurant, two mosquitoes walked in with them. The two brothers started
eating, one mosquito came and sat on one of their heads, and the second mosquito came and sat on the other brother’s head.

One mosquito asks the other mosquito, “Hey brother, you bought a new house?”

And the other mosquito said “Not yet. But I just bought a lot.”

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Tech Corner

Jason Hirose

It has been said that ‘music has charms to soothe the savage breast.’ Music transcends language and culture, inspires people to get up and move to the beat. It has been proven to improve cognitive abilities, reduce stress and increase happiness – all good things when we consider our overall wellness. Unfortunately, the days of purchasing music in a store are gone so what are we to do today? I will highlight some examples of technology based solutions that are available for all major platforms, both mobile and desktop that you may not have heard of.

iHeartRadio is one example of a class of apps that allow free streaming of radio stations from across North America. Stations are categorized by genre of music and includes news and talk radio. You can also search by city if you want music or news from a particular city.

Want to have more control over what you are listening to? Enter services such as Spotify. With the free version of the service you can create playlists of music but you still do not get to choose exactly which track you will listen to. You also will hear advertisements during playback. If you elect to pay then you can play specific tracks and can also download tracks to your device for when you are not connected to the internet.

If you want even more control or selection, you can consider one of the pay music services such as iTunes or Google Music. Up until fairly recently, if you purchased something from one platform there was no way to listen to the music on a competing platform’s device. Now, there are official apps to allow music to be listened to on just about any device. These platforms have an enormous selection of music and you can purchase and download it one track at a time or purchase entire albums at a discount over purchasing each song individually. The natural downside is the cost. Nothing is available for free and, while there are occasional sales, an entire music collection can add up quickly.

While the old methods of purchasing music may be dead, there are other
options available to get your music fix. While not everyone appreciates music in the same way it is something worth exploring whether to improve a bad day or to simply make a good one better.

New Faces New Places
Chelsey Sommerfield

The ILRC welcomes Mandi Panetta to the team! Mandi has been an amazing volunteer here at ILRC for over two years and has now taken an administrative term with the ILRC Training program.

Mandi was born in Thunder Bay, moved to Winnipeg when she was ten, and moved to Saskatchewan when she was 20. She first began working in an office at a Ford New Holland dealership in Moosomin as a service writer, warranty manager and accounting assistant in 2001. Afterwards she moved back to Winnipeg and attended Herzing College to take the Administrative Assistant program. She has worked for a software company, the Provincial Nominee program, a specialty metal distributor doing various administrative positions, and an aluminum fabrication company as an office manager. After taking some time off to focus on her family (she is the mother of two wonderful sons), Mandi decided to return to Red River College and complete their accounting program in November 2018.

Mandi takes pride on providing the best customer service (always her number one priority in any position) and she always considers her co-workers and managers to be her “customers” as well and give them the best assistance she can. She will hunt down any newspaper she can get her hands on to do the crosswords, she loves playing with her new baby kitty Cahya, and being part of the Active billiards pool league. She’s very excited to take part in her first play-offs at the end of April!

Next time you are at ILRC make sure you stop in and say hello!
Across
1. Sometimes we all need to de-______
5. Jane, actress, activist and aerobics guru.
7. Blended fruit/veggie beverage.
11. Buzzy insect that always stops to smell the roses.
13. A wise person to seek advice from (also an herb).
15. A posh place to relax and recover.
17. You are what you...
19. Jogging, aerobics, etc. (type of exercise).
20. Petting this good boy can reduce stress and lower your BP.
23. No cooking required for this diet.
24. 8 glasses a day are recommended.
25. Inner energy we want to be aligned.
27. Source of Popeye's potency.
28. The lads from Liverpool say this is all you need.
30. A glass of this 'nectar of the gods' could help the ole' ticker.
31. Soy in brick form.
32. Only found on Earth (as far as we know).

Down
2. Carrots, onions, potatoes, e.g. (type of vegetable).
3. Freud's concern.
4. In the winter we may have a deficiency of this (a glass of milk might help).
6. Physician, informally.
8. A Buddhist practice that amounts to nothing.
10. Ancient East Indian physical/mental/spiritual practice...and a good way to start your day!
12. Diet and ____________.
14. It's all "g".
15. A good idea to do this before every workout.
16. Place to read books...for free!
18. Meditation begins with focussing on this.
22. 'Nan' might tell you to relax with a nice cup of this.
26. Try more face time and less ____ time.
27. Sometimes we forget to care for this person.
29. The lads from Liverpool were not afraid to ask for it.
PEER SUPPORT/IL SKILLS PROGRAM

Independent Living Resource Centre
3rd Floor Portage Place 311A – 393 Portage Ave

Mental Health Awareness

- Increase awareness of the most common mental health problems
- Decrease stigmas related to mental health
- Build your confidence when interacting with individuals experiencing a mental health problem or crisis.

Presenters:
Doug Lockhart – Independent Living Resource Centre

DATE: Thursday, April 25, 2019
TIME: 1:30PM – 3:30PM
PLACE: 311A – 393 Portage Avenue
3rd Floor of Portage Place

For further information and/or to register contact Chelsey Sommerfield at (204) 947 – 0194. Or, e-mail at workshops@ilrc.mb.ca.
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Your membership helps support newsletter distribution. Being a member has its benefits in that you can vote at our next annual meeting and receive exclusive invitations to community events. If you have not renewed your membership, please do so. The cost is **$5.00.**

Please inform us about the following:
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___ Renewal  
___ I prefer not to receive any mailings from ILRC.

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| IL Consultants: Chelsey Sommerfield, Natalie Pirson | **IL Consultant:** Allen Mankewich |
| **Individual Self-Advocacy:** Marie-Lynn Hamilton | **IL Consultant:** Krystal Polson |
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