



## BeWell

SUMMER 2022  
EDITION

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### 8 DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS

Our wellness program's mission is to inspire employees to lead a balanced healthy lifestyle across all dimensions of wellness.



INTELLECTUAL



EMOTIONAL



PHYSICAL



SOCIAL



OCCUPATIONAL



FINANCIAL



ENVIRONMENTAL



SPIRITUAL

## Wellness Tips from the Top

CONVERSATION WITH JEANETTE GIBBS, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT  
OF AMBULATORY SERVICES AT PENN STATE HEALTH



**Describe your role at Penn State Health.** My role is to support the community medical group, academic medical group, as well as ambulatory development for the health system. It's been exciting how quickly we've grown over the past few years; seven new practice sites and two new hospitals in just two years!

**When did you recognize that you wanted a career in health care?** At the age of 12, I volunteered at a nursing home, and while engaging with the residents I realized how rewarding it was to support them. After several years in direct patient care, I have found my strength in administration and operations.

**What have you noticed about the culture of Penn State Health over the past two years?** After the challenges of these last two years, we've come out stronger as a more cohesive team. Our employees are closer to one another and truly support each other. We have also been able to navigate together through the tough times to continue to strive towards our priorities. From my perspective, being a strong mentor and leading by example are my top priorities. As a leader, seeing my peers and team members achieve their goals provides me with a sense of accomplishment.

**What are some of the strategic initiatives for Penn State Health?** One of our strategic initiatives is to provide better access to services for our patients through our 0-10-20-30 strategy. We want our patients to have easy access to telehealth (0 minutes), primary care services (10 minutes from home), specialists (20 minutes from home) and

hospitals (30 minutes from home). We have specific initiatives and goals set for ourselves with growing our organization and improving access to care, and it's exciting to see these goals come to fruition.

**How have you seen our health system prioritize employee well-being?** Partnering with PRO Wellness, Penn State Health Human Resources invests in BeWell Champions across our health system. Champions are supported in planning and implementing wellness initiatives tailored to the needs of their clinical sites. Interested Champions can learn more at [bewell.pennstatehealth.org](http://bewell.pennstatehealth.org). Also, several wellness benefits are available to our employees. For example, the expanded employee health care concierge service and a new option for employee mental health telehealth services.

**What do you like to do to prioritize your own well-being?** I enjoy working out regularly, and I have learned that prioritizing myself in this way is important. Specifically, I enjoy indoor cycling and the camaraderie during the workouts that supports me reaching my wellness goals. I also meditate regularly to help focus my attention in the present moment. It helps me to relax, de-stress and have time for introspection.

**What motivates you to be healthy?** My grandmother and my kids motivate me to be healthy. I think about my grandmother, who passed away when she was 97. Until that point, she was active, playing bingo regularly and living independently. I hope to be just like her one day. I am also staying healthy for my two sons, so I can continue to be a part of their lives.

**Why is employee well-being important?** Our employees are the backbone of our organization, and the reason for our success. Penn State Health cares about their health, and continues to seek ways to support employee well-being.

*By Elizabeth Hivner, CHES, M.Ed, a Project Manager with Penn State PRO Wellness. PRO Wellness manages the BeWell employee wellness initiative for Penn State Health employees in partnership with Penn State Health Human Resources.*

Available 24/7/365 at 888-881-5462  
or [supportlinc.com](https://supportlinc.com), code "psh"



# SupportLinc Employee Assistance Program

Managing work and your home life can sometimes be a challenge. SupportLinc's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available with emotional well-being and work-life balance resources to keep you at your best. Administered by CuraLinc Healthcare, SupportLinc offers guidance to help you address and resolve everyday issues at no cost to you or your family. The program includes:



## IN-THE-MOMENT SUPPORT & SHORT-TERM COUNSELING

A licensed clinician answers 24/7/365 when you call for assistance with work-related pressures, depression, stress, anxiety, grief, relationship problems, substance abuse or other emotional health concerns. You and your benefit-eligible family members may also receive up to six (6) counseling sessions, in-person or via video.

## LEGAL CONSULTATION

SupportLinc offers a free, 30-minute legal consultation per issue with a local attorney, by phone or in-person.

## CONVENIENCE RESOURCES

SupportLinc's knowledgeable specialists provide referrals that help address a wide range of challenges such as child or elder care, adoption, pet care, home repair, education and housing needs.

## FINANCIAL EXPERTISE

Receive expert financial consultation and planning with pressure-free, personalized guidance until your issue is resolved.

## WEB PLATFORM

Your one-stop-shop for SupportLinc support, resources, information and more. Discover on-demand training to boost well-being, search engines, financial calculators and career resources. Visit the Savings Center for retail and service provider discounts. Or complete a search to explore articles, tip sheets and self-assessments.

## MOBILE APP

Get confidential support and guidance on the go from a licensed counselor via live chat, as well as expert content and resources – all from the convenience of your phone or tablet.

## TEXT THERAPY

Exchange text messages, voice notes and resources Monday – Friday with a licensed counselor through the Textcoach® mobile and desktop app.

## ANIMO

Strengthen your mental health and overall well-being using Animo's self-guided content, practical resources and daily inspiration to foster meaningful and lasting behavior change.

## VIRTUAL SUPPORT CONNECT

This digital group support platform offers moderated sessions hosted by licensed counselors on topics such as grief, mindfulness, preventing burnout and more.

## NAVIGATOR

Take the guesswork out of your emotional fitness! Click the Mental Health Navigator icon on the web portal or mobile app, complete a short survey and receive personalized guidance for accessing program support and resources.

All requests for information or assistance are free of charge and completely confidential. You can contact SupportLinc 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at 888-881-5462, visit [www.supportlinc.com](https://www.supportlinc.com), group code psh, or email [support@curalinc.com](mailto:support@curalinc.com). Access support whenever needed, wherever is most convenient for you.



## PENN STATE HEALTH Concierge Health, Wellness Support and Services

**Employees of Penn State Health and their immediate family members can count on one team to help navigate their wellness and health care needs.**

- Employee Care Navigator and Care Managers are your partners in wellness. They create a personalized experience and assist with maximizing the resources and services of Penn State Health employee benefits that meet your needs.
- Registered nurse care managers help you manage chronic illness and navigate treatment options and plans to support overall well-being.

**Employee Navigator and Care Management services are free and confidential**

**Contact Penn State Health  
Employee Navigator**

**CALL**  
**833-PSH-TEAM**  
(833-774-8326) option 2

**EMAIL**  
PAC\_Population\_Health@  
pennstatehealth.psu.edu



**PennState Health**

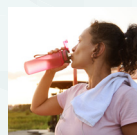
## How To Have Your Healthiest, Most Balanced Summer

*By SupportLinc*



### **Plan at least one outdoor activity every weekend**

Hitting the beach or going for a bike ride isn't just fun, it's also great for your health. Spending just two hours per week soaking up nature could be enough to increase your physical and mental health and well-being.



### **Drink more water**

Dehydration has negative effects on cognitive function like your short-term memory and mood, as well as physiological function like decreased motivation. When we're in higher temperatures, it doesn't take much to start losing water and feel dehydrated.



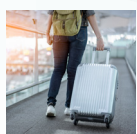
### **Soak up the morning sun**

Get your daily dose of vitamin D first thing in the morning! Studies have shown that morning sun in particular can help reset your circadian rhythms, making you feel more energetic during the day and sleep better at night.



### **Eat more berries**

Berries are in season during the summer, which means they have more antioxidants and taste better. Take advantage of the seasonal bounty by purchasing produce from your farmers' market!



### **Take a trip**

Traveling has a ton of health benefits, such as increased creativity and feeling more open and humble.



## Save the Date!

June 21 | noon – 1 p.m.

**Free lunch & learn on  
Supporting Transgender  
and Non-Binary Colleagues**

This session gives a brief overview of the psychobiological aspects of gender identity, the continuum of gender identity and how we can support and be supported by each other in terms of normalizing and creating safe spaces for everyone.



To register, scan code or go to  
[redcap.link/June2022LunchandLearn](https://redcap.link/June2022LunchandLearn)



# The Impact of Social Media on Relationships



By Genesis Games, LMHC,  
Gottman Institute Blog

In 2019, the average person spent 144 minutes per day on social media (Clement, 2020). According to Media Dependency Theory, the higher dependence a person has on media, the stronger the influence of media on the individual's perceptions and behaviors (Joo & Teng, 2017, p. 36). A study found that extensive social media usage is linked with decreased emotional wellness and lower satisfaction in interpersonal relationships (Christensen, 2018). In other words, if you think your relationship is being negatively impacted by social media, you are not being “dramatic,” it actually is.

It's important not to downplay or dismiss the role social media plays in relationships. Acknowledging and talking about it can actually help strengthen your bond.

## BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Let's highlight the positives first. A survey conducted by the American Psychological Association found that 55% of Gen Z feel supported through social media. Social media allows people to connect to family and friends who might be on the other side of the world. You can connect with people who have similar interests who you might never meet otherwise. In romantic relationships, where couples are long-distance or have to travel often for work, it can help them feel like they are part of each other's day-to-day life, even when apart. Social media has also become a hub for mental health professionals and relationship experts making support and education that can motivate individuals and couples to seek help.

“if you think your relationship is being negatively impacted by social media, you are not being ‘dramatic,’ it actually is.”



## IS SOCIAL MEDIA A THREAT TO YOUR RELATIONSHIP?

Social media can become a threat to your romantic relationship when meaning and boundaries are not clearly defined and agreed upon. As well as, when couples fall into a comparison trap.

### MEANING

Life is full of symbols that hold different meanings depending on lived experiences, family of origin and culture. It's important that you discuss with your partner what social media symbolizes and what meaning it holds for the two of you. Understanding what social media represents for each of you, might help you understand how your partner chooses to engage online.

### BOUNDARIES

Boundaries get a bad reputation. For many, it feels like a "bad word." The truth is that boundaries allow you to love the other person in a way they can feel. Digital boundaries come up in my work with couples all the time because we all live in a world that is more interconnected than ever.

Talk about expectations about the role social media will play in your relationship. Thinking that social media and real-life are two different parallel spaces will only lead you to feel frustrated and disappointed.

### COMPARISON

This one might be the most challenging one, even for the couples who are self-aware and communicate clearly about their engagement on social media. People can go above and beyond to curate a perfect feed with the enhanced highlights of their relationship. The beautiful bouquet of lush flowers, the five-star weekly dinner dates, the romantic beachfront getaways they go on every other weekend, the vintage custom-made ring and the heartfelt poems they write to each other just because. This is all you see. You don't see the criticism or the defensiveness. You don't see them crying. You don't see the hard conversations and the vulnerability that accompanies those. You don't see the behind-the-scenes. Yet, you compare your good enough and imperfect relationship to a perfectly curated "Instagramable" relationship.

This is the recipe for perpetual disappointment because your reality will never measure up to the highlights of someone else's relationship. Oftentimes, when you fall into the comparison trap, your insecurities bubble up to the surface. Maybe you feel insecure about your partner's commitment, and this is triggered when you see couples getting engaged, moving in together, or buying their first home. Maybe you feel insecure because you crave more quality time, and this is triggered when you see other couples going on regular date nights and couples-only vacations. Regardless of your insecurities, don't allow social media to fuel arguments between you and your partner. Your relationship is not less real because it's not up to par with the social media standards of the perfect relationship.



## HOW TO NAVIGATE SOCIAL MEDIA AS A COUPLE

- Prioritize quality time without social media
- Check in with your partner before you post about them or your relationship
- Don't snoop through your partner's social media
- If you wouldn't do it in person, then don't do it online
- Tone and intent are harder to gauge online, so give your partner the benefit of the doubt
- Have ongoing conversations about social media and your relationship

## FINAL THOUGHT

Despite how digitized life is, it's easy to feel uncomfortable talking about social media's impact on relationships. Social media seems too trivial to argue about. Yet, it brings up real feelings, and those matter.

Addressing social media boundaries doesn't have to be a colossal challenge. Be willing to have open and ongoing honest conversations with your partner with the goal of better understanding each other. Also, work together to establish boundaries that lead to emotional and commitment safety within the relationship.

BeWell

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Are you having a wellness event or do you lead an employee program that may be of interest to Penn State Health employees? Please consider submitting content for our next BeWell newsletter. Photos are welcomed and encouraged along with your submission! Send all submissions to [BeWell@pennstatehealth.psu.edu](mailto:BeWell@pennstatehealth.psu.edu).

# Why Preventive Care Matters

By Darria Long Gillespie, MD, MBA, FACEP

There's no denying it: using preventive health care services is key to improving overall well-being, extending life expectancy, and keeping health care costs to a minimum. These services may include vital tests for blood pressure, blood sugar levels, cholesterol levels; screenings for diseases such as colon cancer and depression; and immunizations like flu and pneumonia shots. However, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Americans meet with their physicians for these clinical services at approximately half the recommended rate.



## THE STAGES OF PREVENTATIVE CARE

01

Darria Long Gillespie, MD, MBA, FACEP, explains three stages of preventive care. "Stage one, or primary prevention, is about preventing you from getting a condition in the first place," she says.

These strategies include receiving scheduled vaccines and being informed about the powerful impacts of healthy habits. "We are learning that 70 to 80 percent of all chronic conditions we develop are due to our lifestyle choices," continues Long Gillespie. "But if you flip one of those lifestyle choices, you cut your risk by 50 percent." Actions that fall under this category are highlighted below.

02

Stage two, also known as secondary prevention, involves diagnosing a condition early on and treating it to stop it from progressing. "Being diagnosed at this stage impacts both survival and the disease discomfort of the treatment," says Long Gillespie. "For example, someone diagnosed with early breast cancer has a five-year survival rate of 90 percent, but five-year survival rates for cancers diagnosed at more advanced stages are significantly lower."

03

The third stage occurs when you're diagnosed with a condition, and your doctor's priority becomes helping you avoid its complications. "Let's take diabetes," she says. "Primary prevention is to prevent you from getting diabetes. Secondary prevention is being diagnosed early on and starting treatment—and tertiary prevention is about treating diabetes, so you don't get the downstream effects, like kidney disease, blindness, and heart disease."

Dr. Long Gillespie adds that understanding the importance of these three categories explains why making an appointment with your doctor only when symptoms appear is the wrong approach. "You've missed primary and secondary prevention, and you're already into tertiary—which means you're already on your way to developing complications," she stresses.

## PRIMARY PREVENTION TECHNIQUES



Quitting smoking



Losing weight



Improving nutrition



Getting adequate physical activity



Implementing stress management techniques



Practicing safer sex



Limiting alcohol use



Taking proper safety precautions (such as wearing bike helmets and seatbelts)

## OTHER VITAL REASONS FOR PREVENTIVE SERVICES

Keep in mind that not all health conditions come with symptoms. "Hypertension is a silent killer because it's silent until it causes something that can kill you, such as a heart attack or a stroke," says Dr. Long Gillespie. She says the death rates caused by heart disease have dropped by almost two-thirds over the last 40 years, in part due to preventive care.

As a general guideline, she suggests that adults without chronic conditions visit their primary care physician annually for a check-up. Your doctor can offer a more specific evaluation based on your age, risk factors and overall health. Too many people tend to take better care of their car or pet than they do their own body, says Long Gillespie. "So, if you're giving your pet flea and heartworm medicine but not having your blood pressure checked, you need to get in to see your doctor."

“Too many people tend to take better care of their car or pet than they do their own body.”



## How to Get Financially Fit

By SupportLinc



It can be scary to start being more financially responsible, but you are not alone! We all face the anxiety of taking on a task that isn't super fun and can cause a lot of stress. Hopefully, with a bit of help from this article, you can start your financial fitness journey with more peace of mind!

Just as proper physical fitness requires strategic planning (in the form of workouts and nutritional plans), proper financial fitness requires a strategic plan as well. Having a proper financial plan requires balance. Think of your budget as your "weight," your spending as "excess calories" you need to avoid, and saving or investing as "exercising your finances."

Here are some things to remember when working out your finances:

➡ **Focus on the here and now** Getting out of debt or other tough financial situations can be a long-term project and it's important to take it one step at a time. Spending all your time thinking about the future and what might

happen can lead to your stress levels creeping up. Try to stay focused on the present and get a plan of action together. Understand that everything will eventually work out.

### ➡ Stay positive

Think about all the things that you love about your life. Getting out of these situations often means having to do without some of the material things that we often convince ourselves we need. If you evaluate your situation, it's certain that there will be things in your life that are more important than money. Those are the things that are important. Keeping a positive mental attitude will make everything in your life easier to manage. Being positive doesn't mean painting on a fake smile and struggling on. Really be grateful for the thing you already have and use that positive energy to help convince yourself everything is going to be okay.

### ➡ Face your challenges

We all have times when we want to bury our heads in the sand. If a problem seems too much to deal with, it's incredibly tempting to try to put them out of our minds and

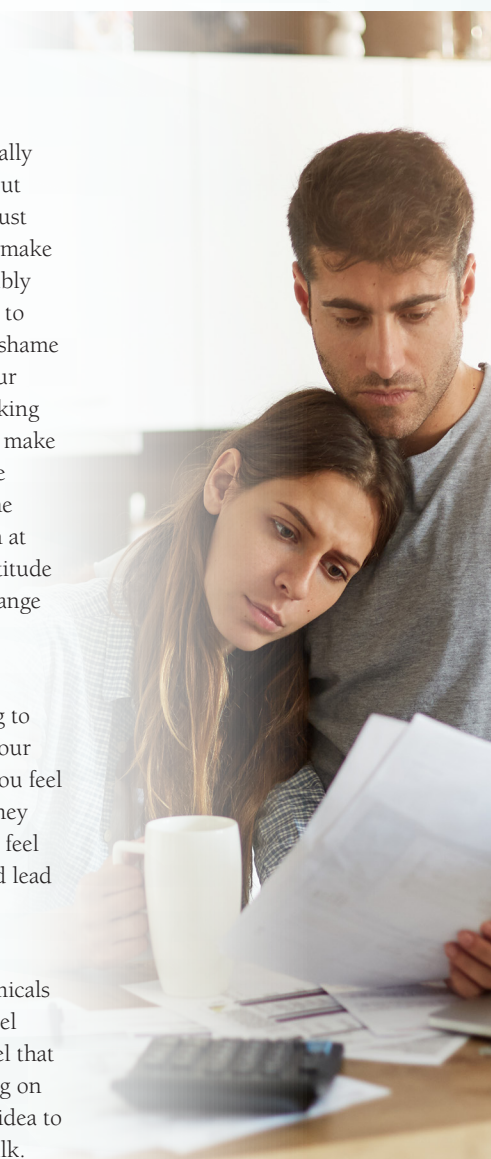
forget them. Only we never really forget things when we try to put them out of our mind – they just hang over us like a cloud and make us feel worse. This can be doubly true when the problem relates to money, as feelings of fear and shame make it even harder to hold our hands up and ask for help. Taking that step and getting help will make a huge difference. Facing these issues early before they become problems is key. Address them at the source with a confident attitude and be willing to make the change that is necessary.

### ➡ Stick to a budget

Creating a budget and sticking to it will be practical help with your finances but it will also help you feel better too. Knowing what money you've got will help make you feel in control of your finances and lead to more peace of mind.

### ➡ Stay Active

Physical exercise releases chemicals in our brain which make us feel happier. The next time you feel that your money worries are getting on top of you it might be a good idea to go for a jog or even a brisk walk.





# PennState Health

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PRO Wellness

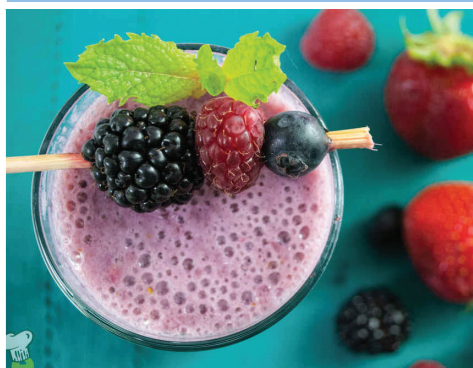
## **FREE** Family Recipes

Delicious and nutritious family-friendly meals and snacks are one click away!

Visit the **FREE** digital recipe portal and try a recipe with a healthy twist. Remember, simple changes equal big results!

Take a bite out of these tasty ideas — visit:

➤ <https://bit.ly/RecipePortal>



**sip**  
diabetic-friendly

**CRUNCH**  
vegetarian options



**SNACK**

gluten-free recipes



**Savor**  
heart-healthy options

