

UIC Solutions Suite Webinar Series
Transcript for podcast on Physical Wellness for Work
Recorded by Pat Nemec

Announcer: Thank you for visiting the University of Illinois at Chicago's Health & Recovery Solutions Suite. The following recording comes to you from the UIC Center on Integrated Health Care and Self-Directed Recovery. Visit our online Solutions Suite to obtain free tools that promote health, self-direction, and employment for the behavioral health field.

Hi! My name is Pat Nemec and I work with Peggy Swarbrick at the Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey Wellness Institute. Peggy and I help out with activities at the University of Illinois Chicago Center on Integrated Health and Self-Directed Recovery. We offer a Solutions Suite of free health, self-direction, and employment tools for the behavioral health field. You can visit the Solutions Suite on the website where you found this podcast, at www.center4healthandsdc.org.

Today, I want to tell you about one of the free tools found in our Solutions Suite, called *Physical Wellness for Work*. Peggy Swarbrick and her colleagues designed this workbook specifically for people in recovery who are living with a mental health condition.

Your wellness comes from what you do. Your daily actions, habits, and routines help give you the energy you need to get and keep a job. You make many small choices every day. These add up, like eating a healthy breakfast or setting up a regular relaxing evening routine. Over time, these choices can become healthy habits that improve your life in ways that you might not expect.

One important reason to focus on work is that work provides an income, and contributes to financial wellness. Work also provides a sense of purpose, positive feelings from making a contribution, and a structure for each week. If your job involves working with others in some way, going to work provides social wellness. Many other dimensions of wellness also can be enriched by working, including intellectual wellness. For me, work has provided many benefits beyond just an income. I hope this workbook will help others enjoy these many benefits.

Let me tell you a bit about the workbook. It starts with information about work and physical wellness and an overview of wellness habits and routines. After that, the workbook is set up in five sections. Each section has two pages on one wellness area. The first page describes the wellness area and asks you a few questions about what you are doing now. The second page gives ideas for actions, habits, and routines that will contribute to your physical wellness. At the end of each section, you will have a chance to reflect on what you might like to change or improve to help you do well at work. The booklet ends with summary pages where you can keep track of what you are doing now and what you plan to change or improve.

One section looks at sleep and rest. If I don't sleep well for some reason, I notice how hard it is to manage when I'm tired. Like everyone, I need enough sleep to stay alert, with enough energy to do my job.

Other workbook sections focus on physical activity, healthy eating, and stress management. Every section includes a self-reflection checklist. You also will find some wellness tips that you can try out to find ones that fit your life. For example, my favorite tip is to use work breaks to take a brief walk. For me taking a walk in the middle of the day boosts my energy and helps keep me from feeling sleepy in the late afternoon.

You may be surprised to see a workbook section on medical care and screenings, but this is an important part of staying well, whether or not you are working. Of course, medical care means getting help when you are sick or injured. Medical care also means getting the support you need for a long-term illness like diabetes and getting the preventive treatments recommended by your doctor or primary care nurse, such as routine checks on your blood pressure or blood sugar.

After the sections on the different physical wellness areas, the workbook includes two summary pages. One is for listing your strengths in each of the physical wellness areas. The last page of the workbook provides a space to list what you would like to improve or change. There also is space to list the supports and resources you need to be successful. For example, you might need a simple resource like sneakers for your lunchtime walk. Once you know what you want to do, you can take action. Be sure to list the people who will support you. For example, if you are working with an Employment Specialist, talk over your physical wellness goals.

Once you print the workbook, it's easy to follow along. You don't need any special knowledge or experience. All you need to get started is a pen or a pencil. You can use the workbook on your own, to support a peer, or in a group.

On the website for our Solutions Suite, you will find other tools about physical wellness, such as *Wellness in 8 Dimensions* and tools about employment, such as the booklet *Seeking Supported Employment*.

If you still have questions after listening to this podcast, check out our more detailed webinar on *Physical Wellness for Work*.

Announcer: Thank you for listening. You can obtain additional Solutions Suite recordings, or download a transcript, by visiting the Center's web site.