



## Personal Wellness

*Personal wellness is finding a greater well-being through positively connecting the mind and body. In a simpler sense, achieving personal wellness comes from maintaining a healthy and balanced lifestyle.*

### Purpose

This training package was created to address the broad concept of personal wellness, fully embracing the extensive research showing that mind and body are inextricably connected and therefore it is impossible to have good overall wellness without good mental health. However, while physical health is easily discussed and dealt with openly, conversation about mental health is often met with discomfort, fear, and stigma. The training package and all resources contained herein have been designed for users to learn more about personal wellness—especially mental health—and to teach others about specific issues that address and support overall wellness, with an emphasis on the unique stresses that occur in the lives of migratory students and their families.

The primary purpose of this training package is to provide an overview of substantive concepts and resources to assist service providers, planners, and trainers in developing the practice of mental health/personal wellness awareness. The goal is for both providers and students to achieve better personal mental health and well-being in order to increase happiness and potential. This training package is also designed to encourage participation in the broader community effort to promote emotional and personal well-being.

Individuals living with mental health diagnoses are often marginalized by society. Mental health stigma, discrimination, and too few qualified clinical service providers are common barriers to recovery and social integration, especially within the migratory community. The strategies to combat stigma associated with mental illness include sharing information, talking openly about mental health, using person-first/non-discriminatory language, and showing compassion. However, one of the most valuable strategies is empowering each of these students to share their personal story.

*This information is presented for educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for informed medical advice or training. Do not use this information to diagnose or treat a health problem without consulting a qualified health or mental health care provider. If you or someone you know is suicidal or in emotional distress, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or Live Online Chat. Trained crisis workers are available to talk 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Your confidential and toll-free call goes to the nearest crisis center in the Lifeline national network. These centers provide crisis counseling and mental health referrals. You may also call 1-800-662-4357 to reach the National Helpline.*



### **How to Use the Training Package**

The training package is available in digital format on the [www.osymigrant.org](http://www.osymigrant.org) website. The modules included are designed to help providers and students normalize conversations about personal wellness and encourage individuals to access help when needed. The modules are designed to begin conversations, increase awareness, and make connections to enable necessary interventions when needed.

This training package includes eight self-directed modules that walk the user through the basics of personal wellness:

- ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences)
- Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care
- Cultural Responsiveness
- Resilience
- Mindfulness
- Self-Care
- Trauma-Informed Supports and Practices
- Suicide Prevention

The modules can be used individually or as a whole. Users may move sequentially through each module or use a specific module in order to emphasize a particular area of personal wellness. Each module includes an introductory guide that details how to use the module, PowerPoint presentations (both a standard version with notes, as well as a pre-recorded version), activities, and videos in coordination with the materials. The training package includes live links within each module to easily access the individual components housed on the [osymigrant.org](http://osymigrant.org) website. At the end of each module additional resources are listed to further the user's learning, as well as questions to facilitate conversation within groups attending a training.

The intended audience is anyone who works with migratory students and their families including but not limited to:

- Trainers who provide professional development to Migrant Education Program personnel
- Service providers in various migratory education settings
- Migratory recruiters who also work with students

This training package has been written and compiled under the umbrella of multiculturalism, with a broad definition of culture that is purposely not limited to ethnic or racial makeup, but rather on the variable values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a people, which is often transmitted between generations. This aspect of cultural responsiveness is important to acknowledge in order to effectively promote wellness to all audiences.

### **Importance of Trauma-Informed Support for Migratory Students**

A student's mental health in response to trauma and toxic stress can affect all aspects of their lives, including the ability to cope in daily life. Migratory families have to navigate several unique barriers including innumerable moves, interrupted education, acculturation, and difficulty accessing community support. These students are more likely than their peers to be limited English proficient, to leave school in order to work and support their families, and to have



unaddressed physical health issues. Migratory families may be at particularly high risk of poor health outcomes because of the effects of traumatic experiences that may be exacerbated by highly stressful conditions such as poverty, social marginalization, isolation, inadequate housing, and changes in family structure and functioning. It also is important to acknowledge that in addition to managing the demands associated with academics, work, personal life, and family, some individuals in migratory communities have the additional challenge of managing mental health issues. It is vital to teach and promote wellness and resilience to support students and their families so that they may face challenges with insight, skills, and as strong a foundation as possible.

Training package users will learn about different situations that cause trauma and the various symptoms of mental health stressors, which can be emotional, physical, or psychological in nature and can range from short-term temporary symptoms to long-term symptoms that people experience for the rest of their lives. The emphasis must always be upon offering trauma-informed support, which is rooted in values of safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. Trauma-informed support does not ask the question, “What’s wrong with you?” but instead asks, “What happened to you?”

It is important to note that actual mental health diagnoses are always the role of professionals, but service providers may learn to see signs and symptoms of mental health concerns and have the confidence to step in and offer support. The sooner people are able to access the right resources, the sooner appropriate interventions and involvement can happen. The sooner those interventions and involvement happen, the better the outcomes.

This training package is designed to be a living document that will be maintained and revised as the iSOSY Consortium and its Personal Wellness Work Group continues to move forward in meeting the needs of our member states and all who use these resources. Please provide feedback as you use this resource as ideas, suggestions, and identification of needs are welcome.

**NOTE:**

*Each session should include a short acknowledgement of the intent to create a safe space for learning, sharing, and fostering communication with others. All participants should be made familiar with the national resources and hotlines and any regional or local resources as well.*



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