



## What does “wellness” mean and why all this talk about self-care? –Mark R. Groner, MSSA, LISW-S

Today, one often hears about the importance of health, wellness and self-care. Health seems easy enough to define, but what does “wellness” mean and what does “good self-care,” a popular phrase, really entail?

*Sharecare*, an online web resource produced by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona, describes wellness as “the opposite of illness and the absence of disease and disability.” It encourages living the best possible life you can regardless of whether you have health challenges or not. Indeed, wellness assumes attention to **physical health, spirituality, meaningful social connections, and mental/emotional wellbeing**. It concerns itself with care of mind, body, and spirit—the whole person.

Isn't considering how to achieve the “best possible life” a compelling vision for us all? Why settle for anything less?

As a tenured (aka ancient) member of the Beech Brook staff, my perspectives have changed as I have gotten older. Health challenges have led me to appreciate the importance of every minute afforded to me. *Moments are valuable and not to be wasted.*

Help to others is a tonic for the self. Meaningful work, such as ours at Beech Brook, can bring enormous fulfillment; however, it is important not to put all eggs in one basket. Believe it or not, I sometimes have to remind myself and other members of our staff to go home. I conclude that work tends to be more satisfying if balanced carefully with robust play. Make no mistake—positive time with family and friends and pursuit of special talents and personal interests deepen joy and enthusiasm in life, itself.

Trained as a clinician in an era when there was little discussion about spirituality, today, we appreciate that spirituality significantly offers enrichment to many. This can be found in formal religions, yoga and other concepts and practices that help to fuel beliefs that honor higher purpose.

It also seems wise to encourage taking sound care of your mind and body. Eat with an eye to good health and exercise within healthy limits.

**Enjoy life at the age that you are, which means appreciating that change is inevitable....lean into the aging process.**