

Promotion of Health, Wellness, and Well-being in the Emergency Setting

Description

Globally, promotion of health, wellness, and well-being are essential aspects in the emergency setting. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as "...a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 2024c; WHO, 2021) -while the Global Wellness Institute (n.d.) defines wellness as an active multidimensional set of lifestyle choices that lead to health and well-being of an individual. Furthermore, the WHO (2021) defines well-being as a positive quality of life for people and societies to allow for a sense of meaning and purpose. Understanding, practicing, and promoting these three aspects concurrently are essential for patients and nurses alike. The WHO suggests that improving health requires a focus on population-based health interventions targeting health promotion, communication and disease prevention (Corbin, et al., 2021; Phillips & Laslett, 2022; Walton, et al., 2022; WHO, 2024a; WHO, 2022). Population health focuses on health concerns of a broader specific population or geographic region concentrating resources to improve health outcomes in the communities served (CDC, 2024a; Corbin, et al., 2021; Walton, et al., 2022; WHO, 2022). Population health shifts the focus from disease management to disease prevention through patient-centered health promotion actions prioritizing a broad array of population-based factors known as social determinants of health (SDoH). These SDoH are non-medical factors the affect health and well-being that can negatively impact health outcomes (CDC, 2024a; CDC, 2024b; HHS, n.d.a; HHS, n.d.b; Walton, et al., 2022). Internationally, limited primary healthcare along with people living in fragile and vulnerable settings are ranked by the WHO as two of the top ten global threats to health (WHO, n.d.b.). In the U.S., emergency departments (EDs) provide care for more than 139 million patients annually (CDC, 2021) and are the major source of healthcare for vulnerable populations (Marcozzi, et al., 2018). For many vulnerable individuals, a visit to the ED may be their only source of healthcare, their only opportunity to receive information regarding how to improve health and a chance to access resources to prevent or slow disease progression. The emergency nurse is poised to influence health promotion, wellness, well-being, and disease and injury prevention, through targeted assessments and interventions aimed at benefitting the populations they serve. Promoting health, wellness, or well-being services can be challenging to the nurse in the emergency setting secondary to physical, mental, emotional, or ethical stressors they may encountered which in turn affects their work (Keele, 2019; National Academies of Sciences, 2021). Thus, the emergency nurse endeavors to prioritize their own physical, mental, social, environmental, and professional well-being to better serve their patients (ANA Enterprise, 2024; Keele, 2019; National Academies of Sciences, 2021). Initiatives targeting health promotion, disease, and injury prevention involve advocating, enabling and mediating by the entire healthcare team, family, communities, and the population as a whole (ENA, 2022; ANA, 2015). Through collaboration with the greater community, nurses can present wellness and health promotion information to patients while also addressing their own wellness, to improve overall community health (Keele, 2019; Walton, et al., 2022).

ENA Position

It is the position of the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) that:

1. Emergency nurses offer wellness and health promotion education/information to patients across the lifespan.

- 41 2. Emergency nurses employ strategies to promote health, wellness and well-being in their own lives.
- 42 3. Emergency nurses assume a leadership role in establishing wellness and health promotion training and
43 skills through health promotion education and interventions in the emergency care setting.
- 44 4. Emergency nurses advocate for healthcare legislation to improve the health of local, national, and
45 global populations.
- 46 6. Emergency nurses are actively involved in research activities to assist in identifying, developing, and
47 evaluating the effectiveness of wellness and health promotion interventions in the emergency care setting.

48 **Background**

49 Emergency nurses have a long-standing history of possessing the knowledge to provide patients with
50 health-related education as an essential element of the ED experience (Keele, 2019). The emergency
51 nurse offers a myriad of interventions aimed at promoting health, such as, but not limited to, evaluation of
52 immunization status, injury prevention education, screening for substance misuse and hypertension
53 (Phillips & Laslett 2022) Emergency nurses also assess for environmental determinants that may
54 negatively impact patient's health, such as intimate partner violence and safe housing.

55 An important component of effectiveness in health promotion is being a good role model (ANA
56 Enterprise, 2024; Keele, 2019; WHO, 2024b). Health promotion for emergency nurses includes
57 implementing self-care goals similar to recommendations for patients such as healthy diet, exercise, and
58 avoidance of risky substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs. Nurses are encouraged to
59 participate in the Healthy Nurse Healthy Nation campaign, whose goal is to transform the health of the
60 nation by improving the health of nurses (ANA Enterprise, 2024). Emergency nurses are exposed to high
61 stress situations and are at risk for burnout. Incorporating self-care strategies including mindfulness and
62 emotional regulation may mitigate the impact of stress on the emergency nurse, providing a positive
63 impact on the care provided to patients (ENA, n.d.; ANA Enterprise, 2024; Keele, 2019; National
64 Academies of Sciences, 2021; Salvarani, et al., 2019).

65 The emergency nurse is a vital link between the patient, community, hospital, and healthcare system, with
66 numerous opportunities to influence the health and well-being of individuals, including those who are at
67 most risk for disease and injury (ENA, 2022). Each interaction with a patient or family member is an
68 opportunity to inform and influence the patient and their family about health promotion, disease
69 prevention and management (ENA, 2022; ANA, 2015). As such, emergency nurses advocate for health
70 policies that decrease health disparities locally, nationally, and globally.

71 Valuable resources for emergency nurses include those available from the WHO, Healthy People 2030
72 initiatives, and the Global Wellness Institute. Each of these resources provide elements that might
73 influence the promotion of health, wellness, and well-being in the emergency setting. For instance, the
74 WHO (2022) speaks to health promotion by offering solutions that enable people to increase control over
75 their own health while also pointing out that properly addressing SDoH can improve and reduce
76 inequities in health (WHO, n.d.a.). The Healthy People 2030 initiatives provide evidence-based
77 recommendations for strategies to promote health nationwide (HHS, n.d.a). The priority areas for Healthy
78 People 2030 health literacy, health equity, and social determinants of health (HHS, n.d.a). Similarly, the
79 Global Wellness Institute addresses the multidimensional aspect of wellness and well-being speaking to

80 the six dimensions including physical, mental, emotional, environment, social, and spiritual (Global
81 Wellness Institute, n.d.).

82 Emergency nurses often care for vulnerable populations who have limited access and understanding of to
83 healthcare services. Understanding SDoH, including genetics, behaviors, social environment, physical
84 environment, and health services available can improve the health of the population and reduce healthcare
85 disparities (Pittman, 2019). SDoH are influenced by money, power, and resources on local, national, and
86 global levels leading to unfair and avoidable differences in health status within and between countries
87 (CDC, 2024b). The patient's available resources impact planning, health promotion, disease prevention,
88 management interventions, and education (HHS, n.d.a; HHS, n.d.b; Phillips & Laslett, 2022; WHO,
89 2022). Level of education impacts health-seeking behaviors and understanding of health education
90 provided (HHS, n.d.a). For these reasons, effective health promotion efforts consider social determinants
91 such as homelessness, income, language proficiency, and health literacy. These factors have substantial
92 impact on patients' ability to access medications or to make lifestyle modifications needed to change
93 health outcomes.

94 Emergency nurses occupy a position of authority during patient care encounters by virtue of their
95 knowledge and thus have the potential to substantially influence health promotion, wellness, and well-
96 being. Sharing knowledge and influencing behaviors could result in significant improvements in the
97 health of the population at large. Additionally, emergency nurses have the opportunity to actively
98 participate in initiatives that support and promote healthcare education and research to benefit patients,
99 families, the community, their colleagues, and themselves. In order for nurses to be prepared to address
100 the healthcare access challenges of vulnerable populations, contemporary nursing education programs can
101 consider curricula that provide some public health and community nursing content and address issues
102 related to the SDoH to meet the needs of the population (Pittman, 2019).

103 **Resources**

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