

Mental Wellness as a component of Positive Supports

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Nobody ever accomplished anything because of what they couldn't do. They accomplish things because of what they could do.

Nobody ever got a job, made a friend, or found love because of their faults.

- Our disability systems, including special ed., do a terrific job of making it very clear what is wrong with people.
- Supports for people with disabilities have generally focused on the identification of a disability (a weakness), followed by the application of interventions to remediate that disability

- Begin with this idea: People are people, with disabilities or without!
- Same types of problems, challenges, and ways to cope with the world.
- Top reason people with intellectual or developmental disabilities lose jobs, homes, and access to places.

JoAnn Cannon's 16 Factors Related to Wellness

Contact with nature

Experienced creativity

Optimism

Balanced nutrition

Work Satisfaction

Goal accomplishment

Economic essentials

Intellectual stimulation

Coping with stress

Rest and sleep

Spirit awareness

Time and space alone

Positive self-image

Physical prowess

Fulfilling relationships

Embracing the Good (Cannon, 2005) details the evidence base.

Relaxation is a need for all of us. Many people, with or without disabilities, have a tough time relaxing. Here are some strategies that work:

- Breathing meditation
- Visual meditation
- Long walks when you teach breathing meditation during walking time
- Aquatics for people with physical disabilities
- Listening to music
- Journaling

Are these included in your support plans? FBAs?

- Where would they fit?
 - Behavior Support Plan?
 - General Support Planning Document?
 - How does it fit into an FBA?
- What data would you collect?

Positive Identity & Happiness

- Support individuals to develop a positive identity – define selves by what they can do (e.g., who I am, what I can do well, where I can make a difference, etc.).
- Individuals with IDD often develop a negative identity based on what they cannot do (e.g., not the person who gets the job, gets married, drives, etc.)
- Help people live happier lives
 - Pleasure
 - Engagement
 - Meaning

Harvey, 2009