YOU MIGHT BE ASKING, WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE IDEA OF FLOURISHING?

According to Keyes (2007), flourishing has roots in positive emotion like feeling happy, satisfied and/or interested in your life AND experiencing mental and social well-being. If we break this down further, mental well-being means having self-acceptance, feeling you have a purpose in life, being excited about personally growing (you know learning new skills like how to rock climb, or knit or build a cement canoe that floats!); while social well-being has to do with feeling connected to others, feeling socially accepted and/or contributing to our broader society (like volunteering through the Center for Civic Engagement: http://oregonstate.edu/cce/). See yourself in any of this yet?

Whether you are a first year student, transferring into OSU, in the last year of graduating or simply working at OSU, your view on life and the choices you make impacts how you feel daily and in the future. According to Keyes, there were certain attributes of people that allowed them to flourish in life. These attributes are:

1) Having a “just do it” attitude
2) Exhibiting self-control
3) Feeling capable
4) Apologetic
5) Resilient
6) Deliberate and intentional
7) Malleable in their mindsets
8) Curious
9) Personality’s that are open to experiences
10) Interested in personal growth
11) Initiators

See yourself in any of these? Oregon State University’s Wellness Alignment (which includes Counseling and Psychological Services, Dixon Recreational Services, and Student Health Services) are all part of a larger goal of the Healthy Campus Initiative. Each of these departments wants to help you flourish and they offer a variety of programs to support you in this endeavor.

Just to name a few, the Mind Spa is a great place to build self-control through using the biofeedback equipment. Through breathing exercises you can learn how to manage difficult situations without always feeling overwhelmed by them (http://oregonstate.edu/counsel/features/mind-spa). Another great program offered through Dixon Recreation Center is intramurals. Getting involved with intramurals means you are practicing taking initiative by getting a team or group together and working on leadership and organizational skills.

An added bonus is having fun with others. According to recent research on friendships, Miller (2014) found that strong social connections are linked to greater pain tolerance, a stronger immune system and a lower risk of depression. Further, a study at BYU (Hol-Lunstad, J., Smith, T. B., Layton, B. J., 2010) with 308,000 people found that individuals with stronger social relationships had higher survival rates than those with weaker connections.
Those with weaker social connection had similar survival rates to those who were smoking 15 cigarettes a day and rates that were double that of obesity! Bottom line... no matter what your age or phase in life, we all need close friends and meaningful connections. A great program offered through Student Health Services is the Beaver Strides program (http://studenthealth.oregonstate.edu/beaverstrides). Here you can get a FREE pedometer (for students and small fee for f/s) and start walking with a friend around campus or the town. Another way to get involved is through the Student Leadership and Involvement office, the cultural centers or organizations like International Students of OSU, Veterans and Family Student Association, or numerous other clubs (http://oregonstate.edu/sli/involvement). Whatever your interest may be, Oregon State University wants to see you succeed and Flourish!

If you still need support, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is an office whose main mission is to support students in their mental health and well-being. Learn more about making an appointment (for students) by calling 541-737-2131 or visiting http://oregonstate.edu/counsel/ on the web. Licensed mental health clinicians are available 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

Whatever reason brought you to OSU, we hope you take the time to create a plan for well-being and flourishing, and that the Wellness Services (CAPS, SHS, and DRS) are part of your strategy!

“There is no health without mental health.”
- World Health Organization

“Flourishing In the Fall at Oregon State” was written by Michele D. Ribeiro, Assistant Director of Mental Health Promotion Counseling and Psychological Services


Still want to learn more? Check out videos from our OSU staff and faculty at http://oregonstate.edu/counsel/mental_health_initiative/flourishing_lectures. Here you’ll find ways to enhance your mood and just feel better overall.