

CONNECTIONS

JUNE 2025

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Think Couples Counseling Is Just for Crises? Think Again!

Did you know the average couple's counseling session costs \$150–\$180? And did you also know that you *don't* need to be on the brink of breakup or divorce to benefit from it?

Just like you visit the dentist for regular checkups, couples counseling can be a smart, preventative tool for your relationship. It can help you:

- Communicate more clearly
- Deepen your emotional connection
- Build a solid foundation for resolving future conflicts
- Establish healthy patterns that last

So, why are we talking about this when it can be so expensive?

Because through the City of Madison's Internal EAP Program, you can get up to 12 FREE couples counseling sessions — with 4 guaranteed!

Don't wait until things get tough. Start strengthening your relationship today.



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Schedule a consultation with Tineisha

What's Next for Wellness?

Author Karen E. Todd, RD, CSCS, EP-C, CISSN

website: www.TheSupplementDietitian.com

How to set meaningful health goals for 2025.

Key points

- Top health priorities in 2025: weight management, aging gracefully, and boosting immune health.
- Millennials and women lead the demand for personalized, science-backed wellness solutions.
- Small, actionable health goals and a holistic approach build sustainable wellness habits.



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- Couples counseling facts
- What's next for wellness
- Bringing moral injury to light
- Teaching positive psychology skills at school
- Summer wordsearch
- Key to Leadership Success-Accountability



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As we turn the corner into 2025, there's a buzz in the air—new beginnings, fresh perspectives, and a renewed commitment to health and wellness. This year, wellness is about more than just physical fitness or the number on the scale. It's about setting goals that align with a deeper understanding of our bodies, minds, and how we choose to support them.

A recent survey performed with 252 adults aged 18 to 99, balanced across genders, age groups, and regions to be representative of U.S. census data, offers a fascinating glimpse into how people are approaching health as a holistic journey. Here are the key takeaways to inspire your goals for the year ahead.

The Wellness Priorities of 2025

The survey revealed what's on people's minds when it comes to health. Whether you're tweaking your routine or embarking on a complete wellness overhaul, these topics might inspire your goals:

1. **Weight Management:** For many, maintaining a healthy weight remains a cornerstone of their wellness strategy. But the approach is shifting—gone are the days of crash diets. Instead, it's about metabolic health, balanced nutrition, and sustainable habits.
2. **Aging Gracefully:** The phrase “healthy aging” is more than a buzzword. People are seeking to support liver health, prostate health, cognitive function, and vitality. It's a reminder that caring for your future self starts today.
3. **Immunity and Resilience:** If the past few years taught us anything, it's that resilience matters—physically and mentally. Support for immune health, including supplements, is in high demand, but there's now a broader focus on overall wellness as a foundation for thriving.

Who's Leading the Charge?

While health is universal, the survey highlighted some demographic trends worth noting:

- **Women** are taking the lead, accounting for 53% of respondents and often acting as the wellness gatekeepers for their families.
- **Millennials** (ages 30–44) are driving much of the demand for innovative, science-backed solutions that fit their busy lifestyles.
- The **South Atlantic region** emerges as a hotbed of health-conscious activity, reflecting regional differences in wellness priorities.

These trends reflect a shift from one-size-fits-all solutions to personalized approaches tailored to life stages, lifestyles, and values.

How to Set Your 2025 Wellness Goals

Here's the good news: You don't need to overhaul your life overnight. Use these insights as a guide to set realistic, meaningful goals:

1. **Embrace the power of small steps.** Start by asking yourself: What one habit can I build today that my future self will thank me for?
2. **Be curious.** If you use supplements, explore the ingredients. Look for third-party certifications and ask how each element supports your specific health needs.
3. **Think holistically.** Wellness isn't just about the gym or the kitchen. It's about sleep, mental health, relationships, and joy.

Transparency Is the New Wellness Trend

When it comes to dietary supplements, transparency is no longer optional—it's essential. Eight out of ten survey participants rated transparency “extremely” or “very” important when selecting products. Why? Because in an era where we're inundated with choices, consumers crave clarity.

They want to know:

- **What's in the product:** Is it clean, free of unnecessary fillers, and backed by science?
- **Where it comes from:** Are the ingredients sustainably sourced and ethically produced?
- **Why it works:** Is there legitimate research supporting its claims?

For anyone setting health goals this year, transparency isn't just about the label on a bottle—it's a mindset. It's about asking the right questions, seeking knowledge, and making decisions that reflect your values.

The Year Ahead

2025 offers a blank slate, a chance to define what health means to you. It's an opportunity to blend science with self-awareness, to connect the dots between your physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Step forward into this new year—setting goals that matter, making choices that align with your values, and building a foundation for a thriving, resilient life.

Here's to your health in 2025 and beyond.

References

SurveyMonkey. (2024). *Shape the Future of Wellness: Dietary Supplement Preferences for 2025*. Survey conducted with 252 adults aged 18–99, balanced by gender, age, and U.S. region to align with Census data.

About the Author

Karen E. Todd is a registered dietitian with more than 30 years of experience in exercise performance and nutritional product development and education.

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FIRST RESPONDER FOCUS

Bringing Moral Injury to Light

Article from the blog at <https://www.firstresponder-wellness.com/>

First responders make sacrifices to serve their communities, sometimes to the detriment of their own mental health. Mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress injury occur at higher rates among first responders compared to the general population. These issues can often lead to dangerous and unhealthy coping strategies, such as substance abuse. Post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, was a term initially used to describe the lasting trauma experienced by combat veterans.

Within the spectrum of PTSD, some concepts pertain to certain circumstances, one of which is the experience of moral injury. This term applies to first responders that experience damage to their core values after trauma at work. Moral injury can create a lasting emotional and psychological impact. This impact increases the risk of mental health challenges such as anxiety and depression, as well as the risk of substance use disorders and suicide.

Beyond PTS

While PTS explains the brain's reaction to near-death experiences and its lingering effects on mental health, some experts believe this term isn't sufficiently specific. Moral injury is the term for experiencing a fundamental betrayal of "what is right." It can occur when there is "a betrayal of what is morally right by someone who holds legitimate authority in a high-stakes situation." First responders may experience a moral injury after witnessing injury or death due to things that should have never happened. Emotions often associated with moral injury are a deep sense of shame and despair. These feelings go beyond the typical symptoms of PTS.

Symptoms

Only an expert can assess if an individual is suffering from moral injury. Symptoms may include anxiety, inappropriate fear, demoralization, and intrusive thoughts or memories. Additionally, moral injury may cause an individual to lose their sense of self, have difficulty trusting themselves and others, and feel powerless to change their circumstances. People suffering from a moral injury might blame themselves or others, believe that they are weak or morally corrupt, and feel perpetually haunted by their past. These feelings can lead to significant issues in relationships and at work, as well as unhealthy coping strategies such as substance abuse. The most severe cases of moral injury may result in suicidal ideation. In these cases, the individual or their loved ones should seek emergency medical care.

Prevention and Treatment

Jonathan Shay proposes the implementation of three principles to prevent moral injury. He advocates for "positive qualities of community of the face-to-face unit that create 'cohesion,'" "expert, ethical, and properly supported leadership," and "prolonged cumulative, realistic training for what they have to do and face." One way that shame is remedied is by fostering emotions and values that have been shown to decrease guilt and improve self-esteem. These values include humility, gratitude, and compassion. For those who believe they or a loved one may be suffering from moral injury, PTSD, or any other mental health disorder caused by the extreme conditions of their profession, it is important to seek professional care as soon as possible.

First responders and their families experience more acute stress and trauma than the general population, and the statistics are staggering. With years of experience serving First Responders, our Family of Companies has a distinctive view of their career and family life – from new recruit training, wellness visits, peer support services, counseling, crisis support, department training, and long-term treatment. We are here to help. Email info@frhealth.com or call 888.443.4898 to connect with our culturally competent team.





IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Teaching positive psychology skills at school may be one way to help student mental health and happiness

Youth mental health has worsened significantly over the past decade, but new interventions that teach positive psychology concepts in school may help.

American young people are reporting historically high levels of hopelessness, sadness and loneliness. According to the most recent data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 20% of adolescents have seriously considered suicide – and suicide is the second-leading cause of death for children ages 10-14.

Perhaps even more alarming than the prevalence of youth mental health problems is the inaccessibility of mental health support for the many children who need it. About 60% of depressed adolescents do not receive any treatment – and around 950,000 children do not have health insurance that covers mental health services.

One solution is to provide mental health care in schools, where kids are. This is already happening. School counselors, psychologists and social workers provide support, teach coping strategies and work with caregivers to help students overcome mental health challenges. Such vital care is essential, but clearly more help is needed.

Research shows that students who have a positive outlook regarding their lives outperform other students academically and emotionally. You might wonder, can positive thinking be taught?

I study school-based positive psychology interventions. My colleagues have found that students who've been introduced to science-based ideas about happiness feel more satisfied with life, experience more positive than negative emotions and have fewer emotional and behavioral problems.

Science of happiness

Psychologists began to study the science of happiness in the late 1990s. Prior to that time, most psychology researchers studied misery.

Psychologist Martin Seligman was such a scientist, having pioneered the concept of “learned helplessness.” But a conversation with his young daughter, in which she demanded to know why he couldn’t “stop being such a grouch,” inspired him to start studying what makes people happy instead.

Initial studies were conceptual in nature. But before long, researchers started to identify what makes people happy, the benefits of happiness and interventions to improve happiness.

Scientists identified three main predictors of happiness – genetics, life circumstances and purposeful activities – and potentially others, depending on one’s culture. Of the big three, the first two are often out of an individual’s control. But science has shown that people can adopt strategies to feel happier.

Achieving a state of flourishing – or feeling good and doing good – is the goal of positive psychology interventions. It can evoke positive feelings, increase engagement with life, strengthen positive relationships, move people toward purpose and help people achieve meaningful goals.

Positive psychology in schools

Positive psychology is now taught in some schools around the world, including in the U.S., Australia, Denmark, Israel, New Zealand, China and South Africa. Most interventions educate students about mindfulness and positive psychology concepts such as gratitude, kindness, optimistic thinking, utilizing character strengths and hope. The idea is not just to teach students about positive psychology as a school subject but help them practice the skills that research suggests will help them flourish.

In typical programs, students first learn positive psychology concepts, then practice using them in real life with the help of trusted adults. For example, students discuss what gratitude means to them, then practice writing down three things they are thankful for every night before bed with the help of their caregivers. After a week, students discuss with adults at school how practicing gratitude affected their level of happiness.

A 2020 review of 57 school-based positive psychology programs showed more than half resulted in positive outcomes, including less stress, lower depression, less anxiety, fewer behavioral issues, better self-image, higher life satisfaction and stronger social functioning.

‘Nice inside’

One intervention currently being studied by the U.S. Department of Education is a 10-week, small-group intervention aimed at helping middle schoolers. I coach the mental health providers implementing this program.

Like other programs of its kind, it teaches youth about positive concepts, including gratitude, kindness, character strengths, optimism and hope. Early findings, presented at the 2023 National Association of School Psychology conference, show the program is being well received both by students and providers.

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We've found students tend to favor activities that fit with their culture or values. For example, one student shared that performing acts of kindness was their favorite program-based activity, because it helped them spend more time with family and pets – the two most important things in their life. Another student said being able to share the strategies with their mother helped them both feel happier. This student was also proud to be able to help their family.

We also found that some students believed the program helped them build positive relationships with others. One student shared, "It's really fun to see how others react when I'm being nice, such as giving a compliment," and that doing so helped them feel "nice inside." Another student agreed, saying making others feel good helped them feel happier.

Positive psychology training is only one piece of the solution for improving youth mental health. Children with severe issues need comprehensive treatment, which can include mental health counseling and medication.

Even though many important factors are out of a person's control, everyone has room for growth in happiness. My colleagues and I hope teaching positive psychology in schools will become a common practice in the future.

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Author: Kai Zhuang Shum, Assistant Professor of School Psychology, University of Tennessee

Disclosure statement

I was a post-doctoral research fellow under Dr. Shannon Suldo (author of the Well-Being Promotion Program; WBPP). Currently, I am contracted to coach school mental health providers who are providing the WBPP through an IES-funded grant.

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Summer Word Search

N	H	C	D	C	S	U	N	G	L	A	S	S	E	S	R	S	Z	X	C	F	Y	N
D	A	E	T	M	A	A	H	G	C	F	R	U	I	T	V	A	C	Y	U	R	E	T
X	O	C	E	A	N	H	A	O	S	K	D	N	J	L	E	C	A	M	P	I	N	G
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T	P	J	N	B	E	H	M	L	E	M	O	L	E	M	O	N	A	D	E	E	S	R

August
Barbeque
Beach
Birds
Breeze
Camping
Frisbee
Fruit



Humid
Ice cream
July
June
Lemonade
Ocean
Picnic
Sailing



Sand
Sandals
Shorts
Storm
Sunglasses
Sunny
Towel
Warm



LEADERSHIP *Matters*

Accountability as a Leader: The Key to Leadership Success

Author: Aish Hinton | Leadership Lessons

When it comes to being a great leader, one key ingredient is accountability for yourself and others. Learn how to implement this into your leadership strategy.

A myriad of qualities separate good leaders from great leaders – it takes more than just being willing to step up to the plate. Having all the ideas and the motivation to turn them into something tangible is a healthy start. Still, in order to go the distance, leadership success relies heavily on having a vital element of accountability. It's one thing to say you're going to do something and another to be able to prove that you're capable of following through on it, as well as supporting others to do the same. In this article, we'll explore the relationship between leadership and accountability, how it looks in action, and why it plays such a crucial role in organizational success.

What Is Accountable Leadership?

In a nutshell, taking accountability in a leadership role means taking ownership of the decisions you've made as a company or organization's leader, no matter what the outcome of your actions is. It's a vital leadership skill to master for many reasons, and it's not just about owning your actions, it's also about owning how your actions affect those around you.

Accountability vs Responsibility

While these terms are commonly used in conjunction with each other, they do actually have quite differing meanings. When we talk about responsibility, we're referring to tasks that are assigned to individuals and groups. For example, it could be your responsibility to present a proposal to a potential client. Accountability is how you respond to and take ownership of what happens after that – say if you were to miss out on the lead because you didn't come well prepared.

Every person in an organization has a certain role to play, but ultimately, the leader is accountable for the overall success of the organization. Showing accountable leadership works to build rapport and trust among leaders and their team members, and it also sets an excellent example for how others should behave when it comes to owning their own decisions, as well as their mistakes. Being an accountable leader isn't just centered around how the business functions, but also the kind of company culture you foster within that environment – when done right, it can have a powerful ripple effect throughout an organization.

Defining Leadership Accountability

We know now that leadership accountability is about taking ownership of outcomes, but how do we actually put that into practice in order for it to have a positive impact on a work environment? Here are some must-dos to make it possible.

Establishing Performance Standards

As a leader, taking accountability for how you set others up for success is incredibly important. Establishing a set of performance standards lets team members know what is expected of them, and also acts as a measurement tool so their performance can be monitored. It's not about micromanaging, it's about giving team members guidance so they have something to aim toward and a sense of direction within their role.

Having an open dialogue between leader and employee when it comes to discussing those performance standards means a connection can be formed, one that's built on trust and respect for one another. The first stage of introducing performance standards is figuring out what they actually are, followed by how they can be measured, and then what the best way to provide feedback is.

Setting Clear Expectations for Your Team

Each and every team member has a set of responsibilities allocated to them depending on their role – clarifying what these are is a must during the early stages of implementing performance standards. Another thing to consider is how each team member is different, so working and adapting to their learning styles and strengths is critical. It's also beneficial to consistently check in and make sure communication lines are always open so that you remain on the same page.

Creating a Culture of Accountability

For responsibility and accountability to remain a focus as a leader, and for the people you're leading, you have to lay down the law from the get-go so everyone has an understanding of what is expected of them. It's very much an exercise

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of showing people how it's done – the more this is played out in the work environment, the more likely it will develop into a workplace culture that is supported by all.

Taking a Proactive Approach to Challenges and Setbacks

Bumps in the road should definitely be expected, no organization can function without them. What really matters is how you respond to them, learn from them, and then bounce back from them. Encouraging people to learn from these mistakes is a great way to foster a positive work environment. Because they are inevitable, taking accountability for them is what makes a true leader. But you can also take responsibility for putting things in place to prevent them from happening in the first place, as can your team members.

Provide Continuous Support and Constructive Feedback

No one can be expected to be a part of a culture of accountability if they don't have outside support and a way to receive and give feedback. Ensuring this is part of a workplace's process will work to keep communication constructive, resolve issues effectively, and enhance the overall work environment and the successes that come out of that. Make sure to make space for these conversations to be open and acknowledge that it must be a two-way street for it to be worthwhile.

The Benefits of Cultivating Accountability as a Leader

Now that you know how leadership accountability works, let's explore why it's such a crucial part of the success of a company or organization.

Creates Trust

When team members see that those in leadership roles are accountable for the outcomes of their decisions and vice versa, a relationship of trust starts to form between the two. Once you are able to build trust, it has an enormous impact on the health of a work environment, takes unnecessary pressure off all involved, and encourages people to want to work hard for the cause.

Fosters a Sense of Responsibility

Encouraging people to take responsibility for their actions and decisions leaves less room for conflict in the workplace, and creates a space to move forward from it with lessons learned. At the same time, for people to take responsibility, it needs to be made clear what is required of them from the outset, what will happen if these expectations are not met, and for support to be provided along the way.

Encourages Transparency and Strengthens Relationships

If barriers to communication are removed between those in leadership roles and those they are leading, people aren't left to guess what others expect of them or what they're thinking. Transparency between parties is crucial in working towards a common goal and maintaining strong relationships along the way.

Conclusion

Building accountability as a leader is as much about taking ownership of your actions and the outcomes of those as it is about the example you set for those around you – lead and others will follow by example. Remember that responsibility is about taking on the roles set out for you and accountability is how you react to the result, but none of this can be achieved in a vacuum.

Setting expectations for your team members, establishing a way to measure them, consistently providing and allowing for honest and open feedback, and coming up with solutions for moving forward are all part of the process of being an accountable leader. Once you lean into accountability, success will naturally follow.



Save
the Date



Free Wellness Conference for City of Madison employees

Building Resiliency & Thriving in the Workplace

Date: September 3, 2025

Time: 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Dr, Madison, WI 53704

Join us for an inspiring day devoted to releasing creativity, deepening learning, and centering the body. This conference is designed to support anyone seeking to reconnect, recharge, and thrive—both personally and professionally.

What to Expect:

- **Whimsical Watercolor Project:** Tap into your playful side through mindful art.
- **Intention Cards:** Set clear, powerful intentions for the day and beyond.
- **Decoding Your Body's Signals:** A Journey into Nervous System Awareness.
- **Building Resilience:** Addressing Family Stress and ACEs through Protective Factors.
- **Yoga Flow:** Energize Your Body, Focus Your Mind.
- **Gentle Yoga:** A Calm & Centering Practice for Every Body.

Come as you are — leave refreshed, inspired, and connected.

This event is FREE, but space is limited.

Stay tuned for registration details!

Upcoming Courses through OD

Date	Time	Course	Location
July 9, 2025	10:00 am – 11:30 am	Conflict Management	Virtual
Aug 12, 2025	1:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Sparking Growth	Virtual
Sep 10, 2025	10:00 am – 11:30 am	Suicide Prevention: Navigating These Conversations While Maintaining Healthy Boundaries	Virtual

*Thanks for reading,
we hope you found the information useful!*

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