

## All's Wellbeing That Ends Wellbeing? A Crossword Exercise

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### ABSTRACT

Organizational wellness programs are growing rapidly and expanding the range of services they provide employees. Many students have limited exposure to the words and concepts employed by wellness professionals. This paper provides a pedagogical tool (a crossword assignment) designed to increase students' familiarity with wellness and wellbeing concepts.

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*"I would prefer to live forever in perfect health, but if I must at some time leave this life, I would like to do so ensconced on a chaise longue, perfumed, wearing a velvet robe and pearl earrings, with a flute of champagne beside me and having just discovered the answer to the last problem in a British cryptic crossword."* Olivia De Havilland

The COVID-19 pandemic brought renewed and heightened attention to employee wellbeing as the stress of the event took its toll on the workforce (Ahmed, Jan, Barkat, Ahmed, & Mahmood, 2021). In response, organizations have been implementing new programs focused on employee wellbeing (Nandram, 2021). Many of the new programs have expanded beyond their traditional foci on diet and exercise to more holistic approaches that include spiritual and religious elements (Yang & Fry, 2018). In doing so, innovative wellness programs are using new words and concepts that may not be familiar to many managers and employees.

Management students' familiarity with concepts related to wellbeing and wellness promotion tend to run the gambit from the readily recognized to the esoteric or foreign in nature (Smith & Puczkó, 2008). Concepts drawn from other cultures or languages focused on holistic notions of health are particularly likely to be new to many students (Suriyankietkaew & Kantamara, 2019). Further still, wellbeing and wellness terms that are grounded in religious or spiritual traditions other than the student's own often represent both new words and concepts. Developing pedagogical tools that engage management students to actively learn a new vocabulary and set of concepts are more effective than rote memorization exercises.

‘Active learning’ challenges students to complete tasks and think about the things they are doing. Crossword puzzles are an example of active learning (Shrivastava & Shrivastava, 2021). Crosswords require students to remember technical terms and apply them under novel or less than perfectly clear conditions (Khaewratana, 2022). In particular, prompts that are somewhat vague or have multiple possible meanings challenge students to consider alternative answers and apply through trial and error them to fill the grid. In that sense, crossword puzzles demonstrate foundational knowledge competence, which is at the *remembering* and *understanding* levels of Anderson’s revision to Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Moreover, using crossword assignments has been demonstrated to improve exam scores (Lottering, Hans, & Lall, 2018) and is well-received by students (Ahmed et al., 2021). Therefore, crosswords have utility as a pedagogical tool for imparting new concepts to students.

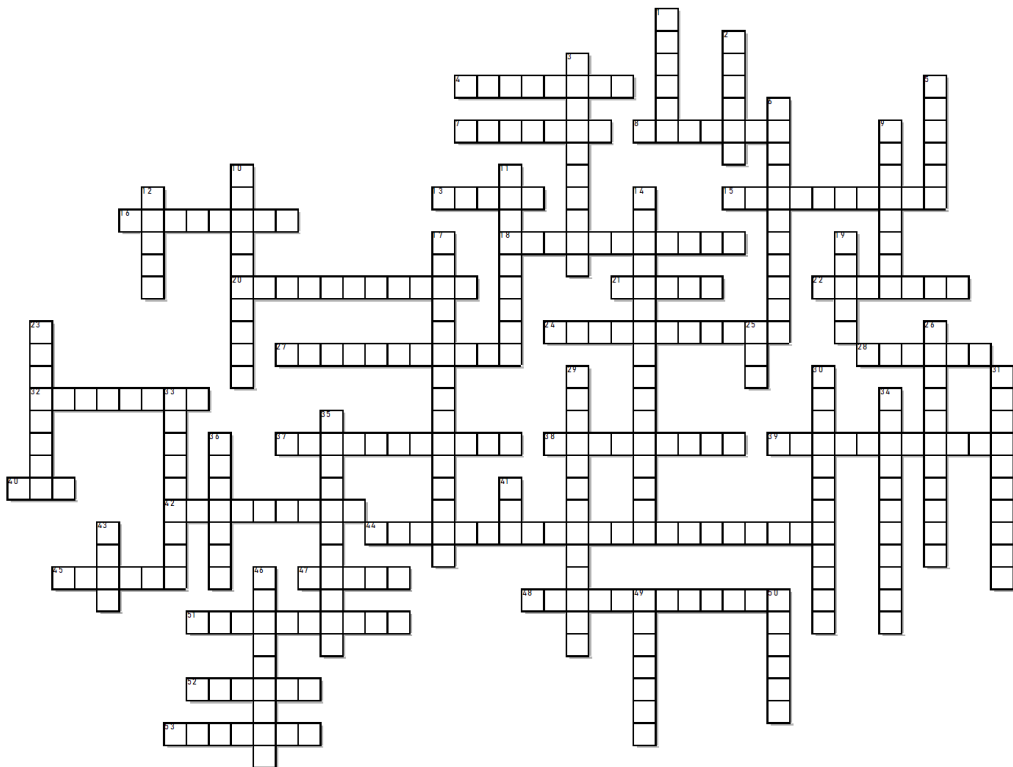
The purpose of this paper is to provide instructors with a crossword puzzle, exercise instructions (See Appendix A), and glossary (See Appendix B) that introduces students to workplace wellness and wellbeing concepts. A crossword of commonly used wellness and wellbeing concepts is included along with instructions for how to use it as an in-class exercise. The exercise has both individual and group work elements to further reinforce the learning. A glossary of the terms used in the crossword, plus some additional wellness and wellbeing terms is provided.

The paper is designed for faculty teaching classes that have content related organizational wellness. Educational areas such as human resources management, health behavior, nutrition, and exercise science all contribute to wellness program designs and can benefit from the content herein. Overall, the crossword assignment can be a fun and informative exercise in many classroom settings that address management, spirituality, and religion as they relate to wellbeing.

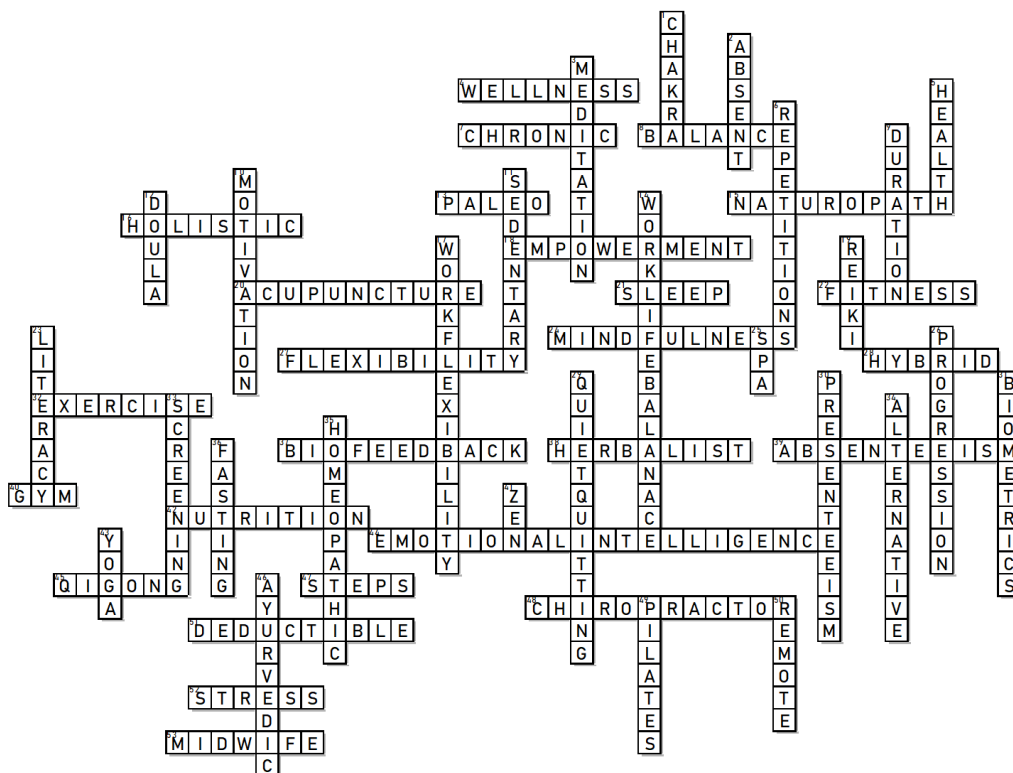
**Table 1.** Crossword clues.

Across	Down
4 State of balance in life	1 Energy point
7 Persistent	2 Not present
8 Don’t tilt the scales	3 Quieting the mind
13 Diet that precludes grains and dairy	5 State of overall well-being
15 Encourages self-healing	6 Number of movements
16 A complete form of medicine	9 Length of time
18 Feeling of autonomy	10 Drive
20 Alternative practice focused on pressure points	11 A lifestyle with very little movement
21 Enough each night is hard to come by	12 Delivery person
22 State of physical ability	14 The yin and yang of daily life (3 words)
24 Staying in the present	17 Time and place discretion
27 Being agile	19 Japanese healing system
28 Both remote and in person	23 Awareness of information
32 Physical activity	25 More than a facial place

Across	Down
37 Well-being regulator	26 Advancement
38 Plant Prescriber	29 Popular term for job withdrawal behavior
39 Chronically missing work	30 Never taking time off
40 Dedicated space to work out	31 Unique physical characteristics
42 Provider of nourishment	33 Evaluating
44 Controlling one's response or self-regulation (2 words)	34 If not this
45 Practice that involves breathing and exercise	35 Like cures like
47 "10,000 a day is the goal"	36 Many do intermittently
48 Trained spinal professional	41 Buddhist sense of place
51 Out-of-pocket amount	43 Just bring your mat
52 Too much of this can lead to health problems	46 Indian holistic means to balance
53 Ina May Gaskin's profession	49 Exercises to preserve joint health
	50 Virtual



**Figure 1.** Crossword template.



**Figure 2.** Crossword solution.

**Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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## **Appendix A: Crossword assignment variants**

- I. Take-home assignment. The simplest way to administer the Wellness and Wellbeing Crossword Assignment is to send it home with the students.
- a. Grading – The assignment should have a low stakes grade assigned as the ability to use outside sources to aid in the completion is high.
  - b. Instructions: Please take the following steps to complete the assignment.
    - i. First, make your best effort to complete the attached crossword and then note how many words you still needed to complete the grid.
    - ii. Second, review the attached glossary as an aid to completing the grid.
    - iii. Third, review the answer sheet to assess your mastery of the content.
  - c. Class discussion:
    - i. Ask the students which concepts they have seen used in wellness programs.
    - ii. Ask the students which concepts they were unfamiliar with prior to the assignment.
    - iii. Ask the students if there are concepts that ought to be added to the crossword.
- II. In-class assignment. A more powerful way to use the crossword is as an in-class exercise with two phases – individual and group components.
- a. Grading – The assignment should have a low stakes grade assigned as the ability to use outside sources to aid in the completion is high. An alternative reward (i.e., water bottle, gift card, etc.) for the individual with the highest initial completion rate and the group with highest/fastest completion time can make the exercise more fun and competitive.
  - b. Instructions:
    - i. First, pass out the crossword grid to every student and give them 10-15 minutes to complete as much as they can on their own. Ask the class, “How many were able to complete the grid?” Next, ask the class, “How many had one incomplete answer?” Continue the pattern until you identify the student with the most complete answer and award them a prize.
    - ii. Second, have the students come together in groups of three to four and have them work through the puzzle as a collective. Give them 10-minutes for this phase. Similar to the individual phase, ask the class, “How many groups were able to complete the grid?” Next, ask the class, “How many groups had one incomplete answer?” Continue the pattern until you identify the group with the most complete answer and award them a prize.
    - iii. Third, distribute the glossary to students and have the groups complete a version of the puzzle.

- iv. Collect-up all the materials except the glossary.
- c. Class discussion:
  - i. Ask the students which concepts they have seen used in wellness programs.
  - ii. Ask the students which concepts they were unfamiliar with prior to the assignment.
  - iii. Ask the students if there are concepts that ought to be added to the crossword.

## Appendix B: Workplace wellness glossary

The workplace is changing rapidly in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. As individuals and companies seek to rearrange workplace norms, the role of workplace wellness is also evolving rapidly. Prior to Covid-19, the world of health and wellness programs was large and varied. Many wellness activities, programs, and features have similar names, but their meanings can be nuanced. Moreover, many programs allow employees to seek wellness in 'non-traditional' formats. The glossary below includes some of those alternative forms. Here is a brief list of terms that inspired by the crossword to get you started.

**Absenteeism.** the average number of sick days or disability days per employee in a given time period.

**Activity Rewards.** a common wellness benefit in which employers offer a cash reward or other incentive when employees complete health and wellness activities, such as exercise, gym visits, or annual exams.

**Acupuncture.** A traditional Chinese medicine, which uses needles to target different energy points and the meridians or channels through which energy flows.

**Alternative Medicine Practitioner.** A broad designation that covers practitioners outside the typical Western paradigm.

**Aromatherapist.** Works with essential oils and scents to bring about healing. Aromatherapy is often combined with yoga or massage therapy.

**Ayurvedic.** Practices a holistic Indian philosophy of the body based on the belief that an individual's health depends on a balance between the body's elements. Ayurveda holds that people are composed of five basic elements: space, air, fire, water, and earth. These commingle in different proportions to form different body types, which are called "doshas."

**Biofeedback.** Employs electronic monitoring to help people gain more control over bodily functions like heart rate.

**Body Image.** the subjective mental image of your own body, including what you feel and believe about your own appearance.

**Chakra.** Chakras are an ancient Sanskrit system of energy points or centers in the body. In this system, there is a physical body and an energetic body. The energetic body has seven chakras. According to this philosophy, chakras must be open for the body to properly channel energy and avoid disease.

**Chiropractor.** A trained professional who cares for the neuromusculoskeletal system and aligns the spinal column through gentle, hands-on adjustments. A Doctor of Chiropractic degree is usually a four-year program post-undergrad.

**Chronic Illness.** A chronic illness is a disease that persists for a long time period and may not be curable.

**Deductible.** The amount you must pay out-of-pocket before your health insurer pays its share.

**Dietitian.** Helps people form healthy habits in their nutrition and diet. If registered, see below under Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. If not registered, there are no specific requirements for the title. Some states legally require registration, however.

**Doula.** Provides support and guidance, typically during childbirth, but now also through a range of medical or life events, including miscarriage and death.

**Duration.** the length of time in which an activity or exercise is performed, typically measured in minutes.

**Emotional Intelligence.** Understanding how others' feelings are impacted by decisions.

**Empowerment.** The ability to make positive decisions and take action in one's own life  
**Exercise.** any physical activity that is planned, structured, repetitive, and with the purpose of improving or maintaining physical fitness.

**Fitness.** a complex set of qualities that people have or achieve relating to their ability to perform physical activity.

**Gym Reimbursement.** a common wellness benefit that reimburses a portion of expenses associated with wellness and fitness activities, such as a gym membership or the cost of specialized classes.

**Health.** a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

**Health Literacy.** the degree to which people can obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

**Herbalist.** Uses plants and herbs to help the body heal. Herbal medicine focuses less on particular symptoms and more on the individual and the underlying cause of their malady. Herbs are often given in tincture or tea form.

**Holistic.** An integrative big picture view of health including relationships, spirituality, and mindset.

**Homeopathic.** An approach to care is based on the premise that "like cures like." A very small amount of a plant or mineral that causes similar symptoms in a healthy person is diluted in a pill or tincture and given to an individual in the belief that it will spur the body to heal itself.

**Kundalini.** meaning "coiled snake" in Sanskrit, is considered a form of divine feminine energy that Kundalini adherents believe can be awakened to lead to a state of bliss and enlightenment.

**Life Coach.** Works with clients to identify things that are holding them back, and helps them work through and overcome obstacles. A life coach can help clients see opportunities they may be missing, as well as help identify unique strengths and talents. A life coach can help with general issues like confidence or abundance, or specific ones (such as sobriety and addiction).

**Meditation.** A state of intense, calm, focused relaxation.

**Midwife.** Assists in the process of labor and delivery.

**Mindfulness.** a mental state of active, focused attention on the present moment.

**Naturopath.** Uses natural remedies to encourage the body to use its own self-healing capabilities.

**Nutritionist.** Provides information about healthy food choices and diet in order to positively affect changes to their clients' health.

**Pilates.** These exercises may involve machines like reformers or props like Pilates balls. They are intended to maximize core strength and flexibility in a low-impact fashion that preserves joint health.

**Premium.** the amount that you (or your plan sponsor, such as an employer) pay for your health insurance every month.

**Presenteeism.** the phenomenon of being physically at work while not being productive or mentally present.

**Progression.** increasing the intensity, duration, frequency, or amount of activity or exercise as the body adapts to a given activity pattern.

**Qigong.** An ancient Chinese martial art involving meditation and slow, controlled sequences of movements designed to shift energy ("Qi") in the body.

**Quiet Quitting.** An application of work-to-rule, in which employees work within defined work hours and engage solely in activities within those hours.

**Reiki.** A Japanese energy healing system that does not involve physical touch.

**Repetitions.** The number of times a person lifts a weight or performs a specific move in muscle-strengthening activities.

**Screening.** A general health check that can identify significant health risks, with metrics including cholesterol levels, blood pressure, blood glucose levels, height, weight, waist circumference, and body mass index (BMI).

**Sedentary.** A type of lifestyle with little or no physical activity. A person living a sedentary lifestyle is often sitting or lying down while working or socializing.

**Steps Challenges.** A common and accessible wellness program activity in which teams or individuals compete to walk a certain number of steps (for example, 10,000 per day or more).

**Wellness.** An active process of being aware of, and making choices toward, a life that is balanced and successful physically, mentally, and socially. The National Wellness Institute defines wellness through six interconnected dimensions: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual, and occupational.

**Wellness Benefits.** Rewards offered as part of a wellness program, including insurance premium discounts, cash rewards, gym memberships, etc.

**Wellness Programs.** a program intended to improve and promote health and fitness that's usually offered through the workplace or through an insurance provider. Some examples include weight loss programs, preventative health screenings, gym reimbursements, or programs based on rewards and incentives.

**Yoga.** The ancient Indian system of yoga, which comprises a number of physical exercises, philosophies, meditations, and breathing techniques all designed to still the mind and induce a feeling of calm.

**Zen.** Draws on the principles of Zen Buddhism, which seeks to find a sense of peace via detachment and quieting of the ego.

Other sources to learn about health and wellness terms include:

<https://blog.sofiahealth.com/wellness-glossary>