

Personal Choices and Well-Being: Balance, Risk, and Building a Plan

Analyzing the dimensions of health, evaluating risk in combination, and building a personal action plan

Audience: Grade 10 Career and Life Management students, ages 15-16, in a mainstream Alberta high school classroom

Grades: Grade 10

Subjects: Career and Life Management

Time: about 60 minutes



Brass balance scale with small symbolic objects representing different dimensions of well-being.

Overview

This lesson addresses General Outcome 1: Personal Choices from Career and Life Management, focusing on how the emotional/psychological, intellectual, social, spiritual, and physical dimensions of health interact to shape personal well-being ([Topic](#), [Outcome](#)). Students move from mapping their own

daily activities across the five dimensions, through direct instruction on determinants of health and dynamic balance, into small-group analysis of case scenarios where combined choices create risk ([Outcome](#)). The lesson closes with each student drafting a concrete, personal one-aspect well-being plan and naming a real support resource ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#), [Outcome](#)).

The sequence is designed to move students from abstract concept to personal application, ending with an artifact (the personal plan) that the teacher can follow up on in a subsequent class or advisory period.

Outcomes covered

- Analyze the dimensions of health and their interrelatedness, the impact of the determinants of health, and the dynamic nature of balance in life. ([Outcome](#))
Students need to see well-being as a system of interacting factors rather than isolated categories before they can make informed decisions about their own health.
- Evaluate choices and combinations of choices that can create barriers to achieving and maintaining health, and identify actions to improve health. ([Outcome](#))
Real-life risk rarely comes from a single bad decision; recognizing how choices compound helps students anticipate and avoid preventable harm.
- Develop and implement a personal plan to improve one aspect of well-being. ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#))
Turning analysis into a concrete, personal action plan builds the self-management skill students will use well beyond this course.
- Evaluate resources and support systems for each dimension of health and well-being for self and others. ([Outcome](#))
Knowing where to turn for help is a practical safety skill, particularly when personal effort alone cannot resolve a well-being challenge.

Materials

- Whiteboard or chart paper and markers
- Printed or projected case study scenarios (three scenarios, one per small group)
- Personal well-being plan template (three columns: Current Habit, Target Change, First Concrete Step) - one per student
- Exit slips or scrap paper - one per student
- Printed list of local and provincial support resources (school counsellor contact, Kids Help Phone number, local health line) for posting or distribution

Sequence of activities

1. Warm-Up: Mapping the Dimensions of Well-Being (10 min, whole class)

1. Draw a five-point web on the board with the labels: emotional/psychological, intellectual, social, spiritual, physical.
2. Ask students to call out one activity from their own week for each dimension (for example: physical - hockey practice, social - texting a friend, intellectual - studying for a chemistry test).
3. Record two or three student examples under each dimension.
4. Ask: "Can any of these examples belong to more than one dimension at once?" Draw connecting lines between dimensions when students identify overlap (for example, a team sport is both physical and social).
5. State the learning intention: "Today we analyze how the dimensions of health interact and evaluate how our choices affect balance and well-being."

Expect overlap to be the key insight: most real activities touch two or more dimensions at once. This sets up the concept of holistic and interrelated well-being for [Outcome](#) and [Topic](#). Do not let this run long; the goal is activation, not full analysis.

Sources: [Outcome](#), [Topic](#)

2. Direct Instruction: Determinants of Health and Dynamic Balance (12 min, whole class)

1. Present the five dimensions of health as interrelated and interdependent, not separate boxes: a deficit in one dimension often affects the others ([Outcome](#), [Topic](#)).
2. Introduce the determinants of health (examples: income, education, genetics, physical environment, social support, access to health services, personal health practices). Ask students to name which determinants they have direct control over versus limited control over.
3. Explain that balance in life is dynamic, not a fixed state: what counts as "balanced" shifts with exams, relationships, jobs, and life stage ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#)).
4. Worked example: present the case of a Grade 10 student who takes a part-time job for extra income (a determinant), which improves financial well-being but reduces sleep and study time. Ask the class to identify which dimensions are affected and whether the trade-off shifts balance in a positive or negative direction.
5. Record the class answer on the board as a short cause-and-effect chain: Job !' less sleep !' lower energy (physical) !' harder to concentrate (intellectual) !' more irritable with friends (social/emotional).

Emphasize that determinants of health include things outside personal control (genetics, family income) and things within personal control (sleep habits, exercise). This distinction supports [Outcome](#)'s later focus on choices versus circumstances. Keep the worked example concrete and specific to a realistic Grade 10 scenario.

Sources: [Outcome](#), [Topic](#), [Outcome](#)

3. Case Study Analysis: Choices, Barriers and Risk in Combination (18 min, small group)

1. Divide the class into groups of three or four. Give each group one of the following case scenarios (write them on the board or hand out on paper):

Scenario A: A student stays up until 2 a.m. most nights playing video games and drinking energy drinks, then vapes to stay alert at school.

Scenario B: A student skips lunch to save money for weekend parties, where they drink alcohol because "everyone else is doing it."

Scenario C: A student takes on a heavy course load plus a part-time job, stops exercising, and starts arguing more with family and friends.

2. Each group answers on chart paper or in notebooks:
 - a. Which dimensions of health are affected, and how are they interrelated ([Outcome](#))?
 - b. Which single choices, when combined, increase risk beyond what any one choice would cause alone ([Outcome](#))?
 - c. Where does peer pressure or the expectations of others show up in this scenario ([Outcome](#))?
 - d. Name one determinant of health at play and one substance-related effect if applicable ([Outcome](#)).
 - e. Propose one realistic action the student in the scenario could take to reduce the barrier and move toward better balance.
3. Groups present their answers to the class in two minutes each.

4. As each group presents, the teacher records examples per scenario that show how combinations of factors contribute to personal well-being and affect lifestyle choices.

This activity directly targets [Outcome](#)'s requirement to evaluate combinations of choices, not single choices in isolation. Expect students to identify obvious effects (fatigue, poor grades) quickly; push them with a follow-up question toward the compounding effect: why is the combination worse than any one factor alone? For scenario B, be ready to discuss alcohol's physiological and social effects factually and without moralizing ([Outcome](#)). If a student discloses a personal situation that matches a scenario, redirect gently to the general case and follow up privately after class.

Sources: [Outcome](#), [Outcome](#)

4. Personal Application: Draft a One-Aspect Well-Being Plan (15 min, individual)

1. Distribute or display a simple three-column planning template: Current Habit | Target Change | First Concrete Step (this week).
2. Ask each student to choose one dimension of well-being (physical, emotional, social, intellectual, or spiritual) where they want to make one realistic improvement ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#)).
3. Students write:
 - a. One current habit related to that dimension (example: "I check my phone right before bed.")
 - b. One specific, measurable target change (example: "Phone charges outside my bedroom by 10:30 p.m. on school nights.")
 - c. One first concrete step they will take this week, including who or what could support them (example: "Ask a parent to keep the charger in the kitchen; text a friend to hold me accountable.")
4. Ask two or three volunteers to share their plan aloud (sharing is optional, never mandatory).
5. Collect plans, or have students photograph them, for a short follow-up check in one week.

This activity operationalizes [Outcome](#)'s requirement to develop and implement a personal plan to improve one aspect of well-being, and links to [Outcome](#)'s health action plans and [Outcome](#)'s support systems. Keep plans private if a student prefers; do not force sharing of sensitive personal details. For students who choose emotional or social well-being, remind them that support systems (family, counsellor, friend) belong in the plan ([Outcome](#)).

Sources: [Outcome](#), [Outcome](#), [Outcome](#)

5. Consolidation: Exit Ticket and Balance Check-In (5 min, individual)

1. Distribute a small exit slip or use a scrap of paper.
2. Ask students to answer two short questions:
 - a. Name one way two dimensions of your health affect each other in your own life right now.
 - b. What is one support system or resource you could use if you needed help with your well-being plan ([Outcome](#))?
3. Collect exit slips as students leave, or have them submit digitally if available.

Use these exit slips as a quick formative check on whether students grasped the interrelatedness of dimensions ([Outcome](#), [Topic](#)) and can name a real support system ([Outcome](#)), such as a school counsellor, Kids Help Phone, a family doctor, or a trusted adult.

Sources: [Outcome](#), [Topic](#), [Outcome](#)

Differentiation

Extension

- Ask students to research one determinant of health they do not personally control (e.g., genetics, access to health care, socioeconomic status) and write a short paragraph on one policy or community program that helps offset its impact (links to [Outcome](#)).
- Have advanced students design a case scenario of their own that layers three or more combined risk factors, then trade scenarios with another student to analyze ([Outcome](#)).

Support

- Provide a partially completed cause-and-effect chain template for Activity 2 so students only need to fill in the missing dimension or effect rather than build the chain from scratch.
- Offer a word bank of the five dimensions of health and common determinants of health for students who need support generating vocabulary during the case study activity.
- Allow the personal well-being plan (Activity 4) to be completed orally with the teacher or an educational assistant instead of in writing.

Inclusive supports

- Frame all scenario discussions and personal plans as private by default; never require a student to disclose personal habits or struggles aloud.
- Use gender-neutral language in all scenarios and examples.
- Have printed support system contact information (school counsellor, Kids Help Phone, local health line) visibly posted or handed out so all students see it regardless of whether they raise a hand to ask.

Assessment

Formative. Circulate during the case study analysis (Activity 3) and listen for whether groups can describe the combination of factors that contribute to well-being and identify peer pressure or determinants of health accurately.

Look for: Group chart paper shows a clear cause-and-effect combination (for example, sleep loss plus stimulant use plus academic pressure) rather than a list of unconnected effects. ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#))

Formative. Review exit slips for evidence that students can articulate an interrelationship between two dimensions of health and name a real, usable support system.

Look for: Exit slip names a specific interrelationship (not a vague statement like "everything affects everything") and a concrete, real support resource (school counsellor, helpline, family member, coach). ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#))

Summative. Collect the personal well-being plans (Activity 4) and assess against three criteria: the plan names a specific current habit, states a measurable target change, and identifies a realistic first step with a named support person or resource.

Look for: Plan meets all three criteria in specific, actionable language rather than vague intentions (for example, not "sleep more" but "phone charges outside bedroom by 10:30 p.m."). ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#), [Outcome](#))

Vocabulary

- **Dimensions of health:** The five interrelated aspects of a person's health: emotional/psychological, intellectual, social, spiritual, and physical. A change in one dimension typically affects the others.
- **Determinants of health:** Factors that influence a person's health status, including some within personal control (sleep habits, exercise, diet) and some largely outside personal control (genetics, income, access to health services).
- **Dynamic balance:** The idea that a balanced life is not a fixed state but shifts continually in response to changing demands such as school, work, relationships, and stress.

- **Combined risk:** The increased likelihood of harm that results when two or more risky choices or circumstances occur together, producing an effect greater than any single factor alone.
- **Support system:** A person, service, or resource (such as a school counsellor, family member, or helpline) that an individual can access to maintain or improve a dimension of well-being.

For families

- Ask your teenager which dimension of well-being (physical, emotional, social, intellectual, or spiritual) they identified as needing attention this week, and offer to support one small, concrete step rather than a big overhaul.
- Keep phone chargers outside bedrooms as a household habit; sleep is a physical well-being factor that affects mood, concentration, and relationships.
- If your teenager mentions stress about balancing school, work, and social life, remind them that balance shifts over time and is normal to renegotiate.

Sources

- [Outcome](#): "analyze the dimensions of health and their interrelatedness, the impact of the determinants of health, and the dynamic nature of balance in life"
- [Outcome](#): "evaluate choices and combinations of choices that can create barriers to achieving and maintaining health, and identify actions to improve health"
- [Topic](#): "Students will apply an understanding of the emotional/psychological, intellectual, social, spiritual and physical dimensions of health, and the dynamic interplay of these factors, in managing personal well-being."
- [Outcome](#): "determine practices and behaviours that contribute to optimal physical well-being"
- [Outcome](#): "evaluate resources and support systems for each dimension of health and well-being for self and others"
- [Outcome](#): "recognize that change and stress are inevitable in life"

All scenarios and discussion prompts use general, non-identifying situations appropriate for Grade 10 students, avoid graphic or triggering detail regarding substance use or self-harm, and direct students toward real support resources without requiring disclosure of personal circumstances.