

Adolescent Wellness

Dr. Sanjeev Luthra '95

Paediatrician

Who Am I?

General Paediatrician in Brampton

UTS '95, Engineering Science at UofT, Medical School at UofT, Paediatric residency at Hospital for Sick Children

Grew up in Richmond Hill (still there), married with 2 young boys (4 and 6 years)

Disclaimer – I am not a parent of a teenager

What I do

See a wide variety of patient from premature newborns to adolescents

Office based practice

Behavioural issues – child doesn't eat, doesn't sleep, or 'driving me crazy'

School Issues – not paying attention, poor performance

Autism – impaired social communication with restricted/repetitive interests

Medical model

Understand, treat, manage, counsel around a patient's specific problems

Do I know anything about wellness as a whole??

Objectives

1. Explore the definition of wellness as it relates to adolescents (in a high achieving environment)
2. Examine the UTS Wellness 4 Pillars model
3. Present a conceptual framework for wellness in adolescence and its' components

World Health Organization 1946

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

- Importance of social well-being in adolescence

Halbert L Dunn 1977

An integrated method of functioning which is oriented toward maximizing the potential for which the individual is capable. It requires that the individual maintain as continuum of balance and purposeful direction within the environment in which he is functioning

Halbert L Dunn 1977

Maximizing of potential - the very raison d'être of UTS?

Continuum of balance

- that of balance with academic achievement
- Achievement and accomplishment with growth and development in other aspects

Purposeful direction

- Can there be a lack of perception of purpose, with an imbalance with parental outlook (which may be highly purposeful)?
- Purpose different than parental outlook
- overdriven towards a purpose as basis of anxiety and stress

National Wellness Institute

An active process through which people become aware of and make choices toward a more successful existence

National Wellness Institute

Active process – conscious engagement?

Awareness

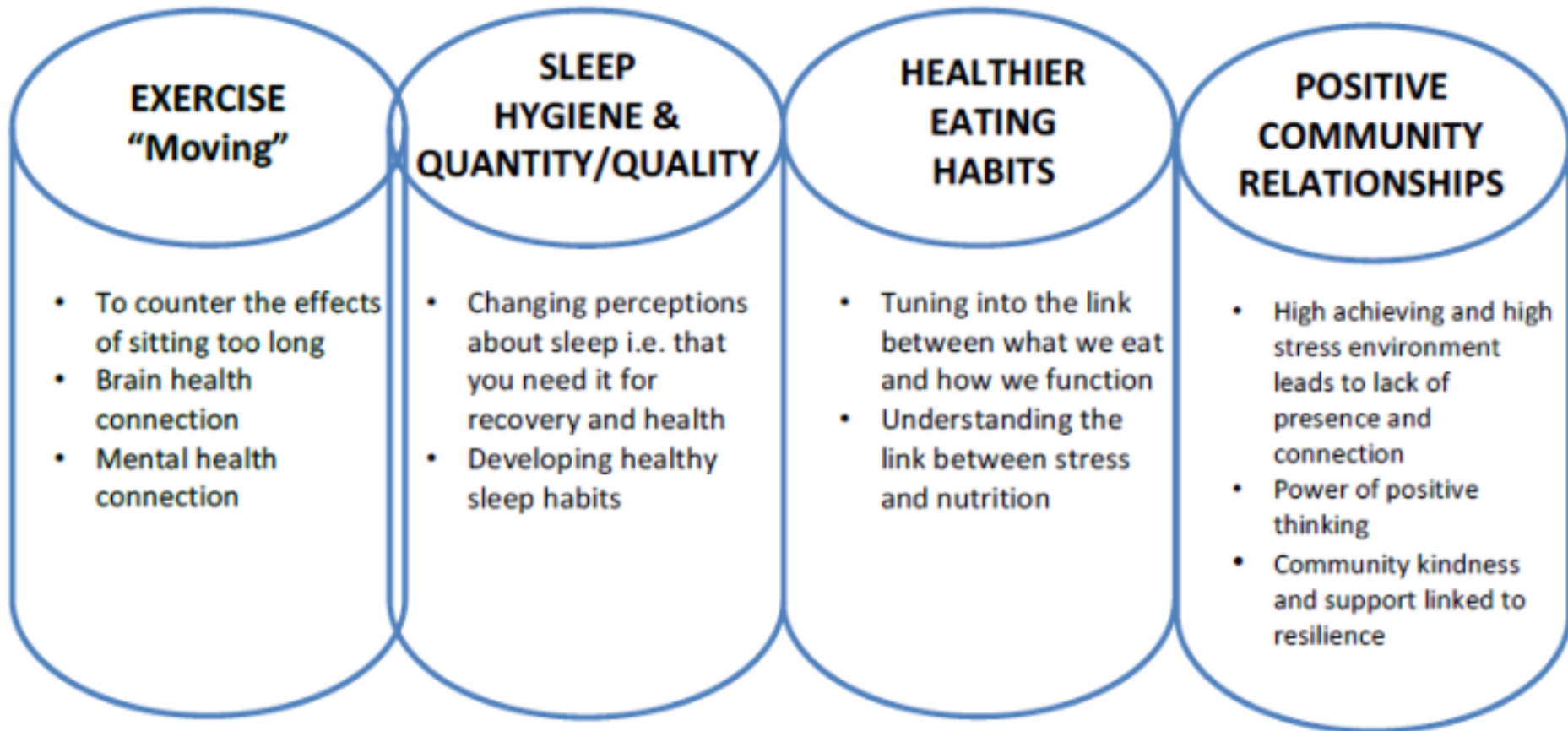
- Implies having ‘knowledge of the self’
- Process of mindful reflection

Make choices - respecting adolescents as ‘active agents’

Successful existence – in whose eyes?

- Modelling off parents
- What do they want different?

UTS '4 Pillars'



Habitual – Diet, Sleep, Exercise

- Normative guidelines
 - exercise how often?
 - how much sleep?
 - what to eat?

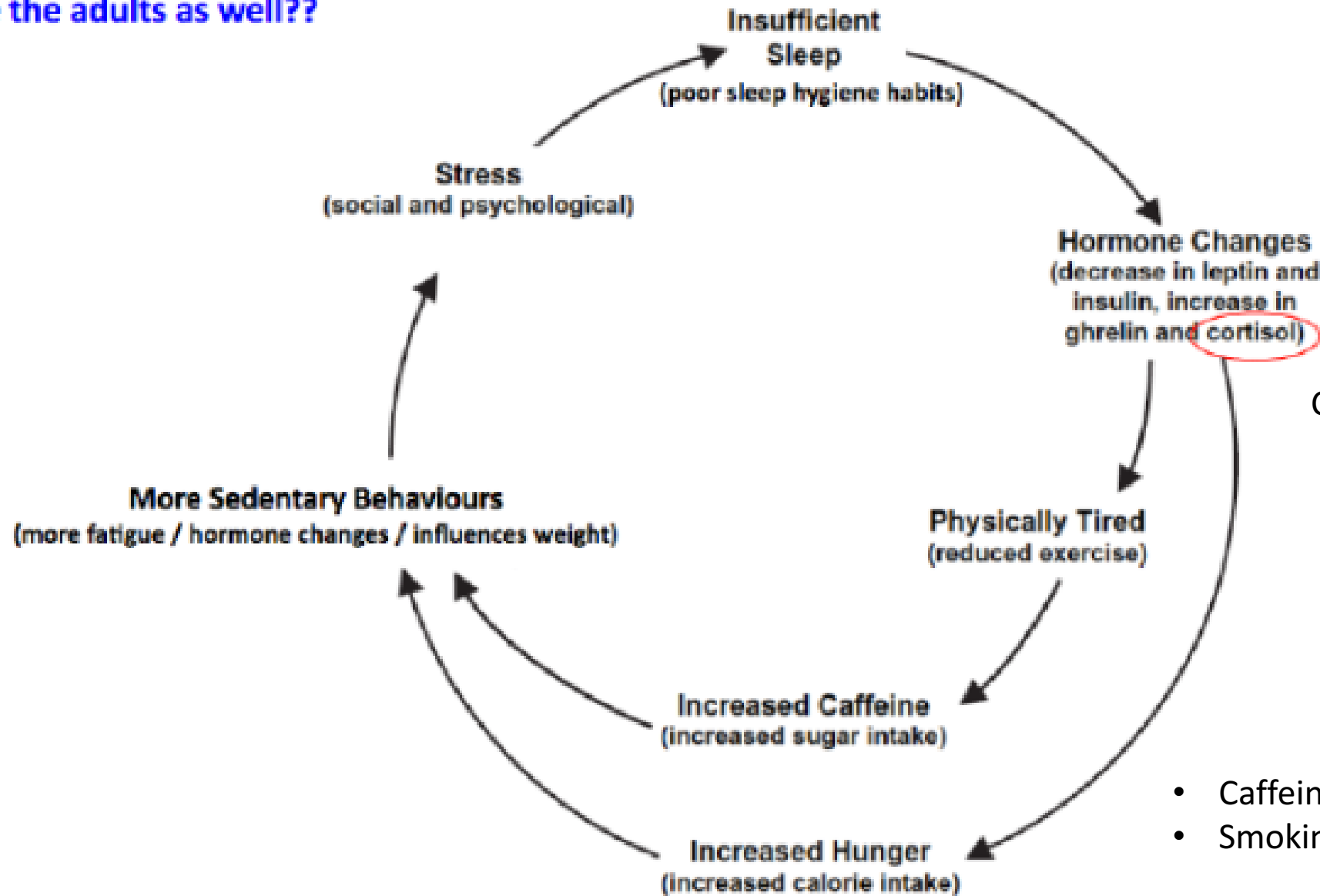
Trajectory - determined from childhood and upbringing

- Physical activity - sports, family participation
- Sleep – routines, hygiene
- Diet routines and habits

Compromises_ – trade off of one thing for another – ‘Vicious Cycle’

Vicious Cycle Adolescents are in: Less sleep/quality of sleep -> More Sedentary Behaviour ->

Maybe the adults as well??



Sleep compromised by:

- Studying/projects
- Extracurricular
- Commute time

Cortisol – stress hormone

- Caffeine – compensate for fatigue
- Smoking – anxiety/stress relief

Habitual – Diet, Sleep, Exercise

Changes – red flag for mental health issues

- Diet – changes in appetite
- Sleep – inability, too much, too little
- Activity – low energy level (or unusually high energy level)

Positive Community Relationship

‘High achieving and high stress environment leads to lack of presence and connection’

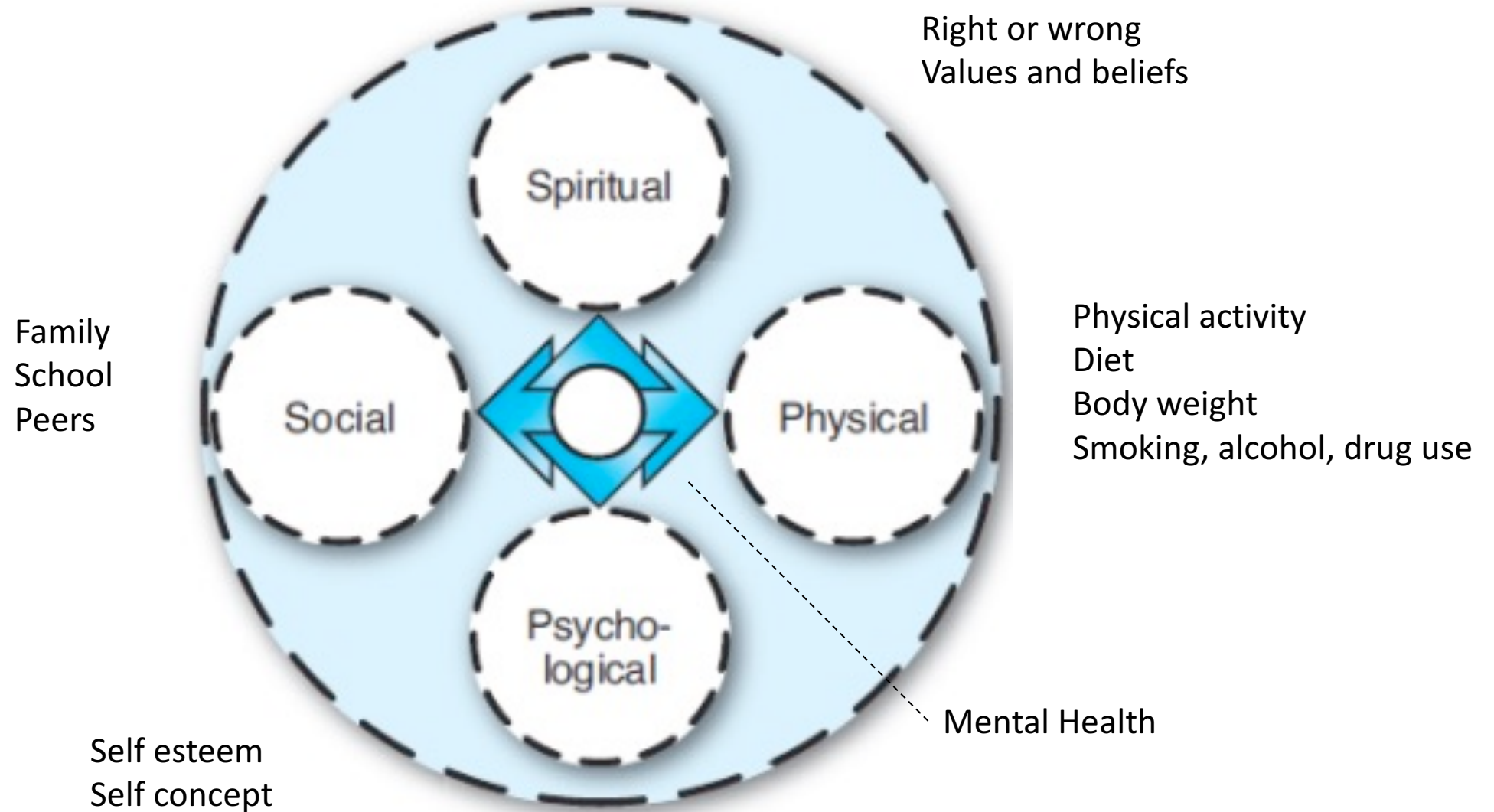
Stress

- Activation of fight or flight response
- inhibits our ability to be present and connect?

Lack of presence

- Over focus on ‘high achievement’

Wellness Developmental Dimensions



Wellness Developmental Dimensions

Psychological - self esteem, self-worth

- High achieving environment – Protective vs Risks?
- Bullying?

Spiritual

- Morality, beliefs – opportunity for discussion and engagement
- Respecting adolescents as independent thinkers

Social – School

- high correlation with wellness
- “I feel the people in the school care about me”
- “I feel connected to my school”

Other Elements of Wellness

Physical appearance – grooming, fashion

- Any different at UTS?

Realistic assessment of limitations

- Can children want or be compelled to take on too much?

Independent ability to cope with stress

Psychosexual

- Identity, discovery, experimentation, relationships
- (?any different in a high achieving environment?)

Conclusions

1. Habitual activities like diet, sleep, and nutrition are foundational but there are many other aspects of wellness
2. Holistic Wellness – physical, mental, psychological and spiritual domains
3. Community connection is so important – but how do we understand how adolescent growth and development (including psychosexual) plays out in a high achieving environment?

References

1. UTS Wellness Document - *Our Journey to Wellness @ UTS*
2. Spurr et al, Paediatric Nursing Nov/Dec 2012, *A Framework for Exploring Adolescent Wellness*
3. Ahanonu et al, Journal of Caring Sciences, 2016, *Adolescents' Interpretation of the Concept of Wellness: A Qualitative Study*