



Mental Wellness Initiative Briefing Paper 2017

What is the aim of your initiative?

To identify, understand, and promote evidence-based practices, lifestyle choices, and psychological development as pathways to becoming and staying well with the goal of thriving mentally as well as physically – i.e. continued growth throughout the lifespan.

What or who are the current “news makers” or trends in the initiative’s industry/sector?

1. A growing body of evidence supports the potential for continuous adult brain development and happiness through a range of pathways – meditation, movement (yoga and dance especially) nutrition, etc. – suggesting that there is no end-point to psychological development: <https://www.globalwellnessinstitute.org/mental-wellness-evidence>
2. *Heads Together* (www.headstogether.org.uk), a UK charity founded by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry, has drawn attention to the need ‘to feel normal about mental health’ noting that ‘good conversations can make such a difference.’
3. *The Lancet Commission on Dementia* offers hope for early stage intervention, identifying nine modifiable risk factors linked to dementia: [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/behindtheheadlines/news/2017-07-20-nine-lifestyle-changes-may-reduce-risk-of-dementia-/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/behindtheheadlines/news/2017-07-20-nine-lifestyle-changes-may-reduce-risk-of-dementia/)

Name some (high level) challenges facing your industry/sector?

In the midst of a global mental health crisis, as identified by WHO and the opioid addiction epidemic in the U.S. (now also emerging in the UK), keeping focused on optimal mental well-being and growth can be a challenge amidst global attention to therapies rather than on paths to growth. While therapy is clearly of value in dealing with mental illness, there is a focus on personal autonomy and self-sufficiency. There is evidence that many of these pathways, as reflected in the MWI’s Evidence Section, are also valuable therapeutically.

Where do you see the opportunities for industry/sector?

Opportunities exist to embed knowledge of mental wellness into educational curricula, corporate wellness, and the national debate around healthcare, and these can be translated into programming and protocols in both the wellness arena and on the clinical level (e.g. in adolescent mental health, healthy aging, and in both acute and chronic care environments).

Are there any “heroes” (either companies or individuals) who stand out in your industry/sector?

- The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (Prince William and Katherine) and Prince Harry for *Heads Together*, and Prince Harry for founding *Invictus Games*, the only international sporting event for wounded, injured, and sick servicemen and women.
- Michelle Obama for the *Let’s Move* campaign and the healthy school lunch program, both of which contribute to enhancing mental well-being as well as physical health.
- India’s Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, for promoting International Yoga Day and yoga in schools.
- The many small organizations and individuals worldwide who promote the multiple wellness approaches that enhance mental well-being.

Is there noteworthy investment happening in your industry/sector?

The focus on well-being is creating an environment where all mental health sectors can benefit. The narrative is shifting from absence of illness to optimization of well-being. Mental health and wellness professionals will need training and mental health services will need support in reorienting these services. The wellness industry can provide new knowledge and skills for shifting the paradigm from a reactive treatment of disease to a proactive prevention of illness through wellness lifestyles. The healthcare industry can meet upcoming demand via the creation of new development formats by wellness providers, presenting a key opportunity for investment and growth.

Name any key accomplishments (milestones) made by your initiative?

- **Generating an evidence base:** This is unique in its broad spectrum approach, from the molecular level of nutrition to deep rest through meditation and optimal sleep habits; brain and mood enhancement through movement and the effects of positive psychology; through benefits from connecting with nature and understanding the influence of the sun on mental wellness (light levels and Vitamin D) and the moon (sleep patterns) on mental well-being and our place in the universe.
- **White Paper on Mental Wellness:** Contributions from many expert MWI members.
- **Media interviews and awareness-raising** around the topic of mental wellness.

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