



Ministry Modules are intended for use with the Leader's Guide. Appendices and Resources referenced in modules can be found within the Guide.

Wellness Ministry

to prevent and treat metabolic syndrome



This Mission Module is provided through a Partnership with Association of Brethren Caregivers, of the Church of the Brethren, and Caregiving Ministries, a division of FamilyCare America, Inc.

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Purpose

The mission of the Wellness Ministry is to continue Jesus' mission of love and healing today. This ministry is an enduring sign of the belief that every person is a treasure, every life a sacred gift, every human being a unity of body, mind, and spirit.

The Wellness Ministry works to bring alive the Gospel vision of justice and peace. It seeks to answer God's call to foster healing, act with compassion, and promote wellness for all persons and communities, with special attention to those who are poor, underserved and most vulnerable. This Ministry strives to transform hurt into hope.

Goals and Objectives

- To encourage members to adopt healthy living and behaviors (spiritual, emotional, physical) with special emphasis on metabolic syndrome (obesity, hypertension, insulin resistance, high cholesterol).
- To promote simple living, because simple living is healthy, spiritually centered living. This Ministry will raise awareness of the connection between physical, mental, spiritual, social and emotional aspects of life. "What does simple living look like today?"

Parameters and Limitations

This ministry does not:

- Advise any procedure that requires a physician's order (i.e., administering medications, performing "hands-on" or invasive procedures).
- Suggest or endorse a specific diet or exercise program.

This ministry does:

- Suggest healthy habits to prevent or address metabolic syndrome.
- Suggest methods for congregations to encourage participation in such healthy habits.
- Suggest congregants have a physical examination with their doctor before beginning an exercise regime.



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Suggested Process for this Ministry:

The Wellness Ministry may be developed in the absence of a formal Parish Nurse ministry. The Wellness Team could include professionals in health, legal, counseling, social service, and educational fields to address health needs within a congregation.

1. Educate the church as to what the Wellness Ministry is and how it can benefit the health of church members of all ages. Educate the congregation on metabolic syndrome, its symptoms and treatment.
2. Inform the congregation what can and cannot be expected from the Wellness Ministry. This Wellness Ministry is designed to encourage healthy living and behaviors (spiritual, emotional, physical) with special emphasis on metabolic syndrome (obesity, hypertension, insulin resistance, high cholesterol).
3. Survey the church for people who are willing and able to work in this ministry (see Appendix A).
4. Create a "Health Cabinet" to oversee the program. The cabinet consists of health care, legal, educational and other professionals within the local church (or churches, if this ministry is combined).
5. Provide training to volunteers, informing them of the process of this ministry.
6. Survey homebound members for health concerns and needs (see Wellness Assessment at the end of this section).
7. Implement the program with a coordinator.
8. Solicit outside resources for health education.
9. Schedule regular meetings for volunteers to increase knowledge of health issues through in-service training and to discuss and work out problems with the Wellness Ministry Team.
10. Implement program activities to promote wellness. This can include a Wellness Sunday, a yearly challenge to lose weight and exercise regularly with the advice of a physician, support groups to address specific health barriers or challenges, classes to educate the congregation on the dangers, development and prevention of metabolic syndrome, healthy eating seminars and church potlucks, Healthy Mission activities such as Walk for Hunger or Cancer, Health Fairs, wellness retreats, a List Serv to opt in to receive weekly encouragement emails, or parish nursing.
11. Periodically evaluate the ministry. (See Evaluation Tool, p. 19, Administrative Guide.)



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RESOURCES

- American Heart Association
- National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute
- American Diabetes Association
- Community health professionals
- Brethren Press
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Health Department
- Area Agency on Aging
- Community library



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What is Metabolic Syndrome?

The metabolic syndrome is characterized by a group of metabolic risk factors in one person. They include:

- Abdominal obesity (excessive fat tissue in and around the abdomen)
- Atherogenic dyslipidemia (blood fat disorders — high triglycerides, low HDL cholesterol and high LDL cholesterol — that foster plaque buildups in artery walls)
- Elevated blood pressure
- Insulin resistance or glucose intolerance (the body can't properly use insulin or blood sugar)
- Prothrombotic state (e.g., high fibrinogen or plasminogen activator inhibitor-1 in the blood)
- Proinflammatory state (e.g., elevated C-reactive protein in the blood)

People with the metabolic syndrome are at increased risk of coronary heart disease and other diseases related to plaque buildups in artery walls (e.g., stroke and peripheral vascular disease) and type 2 diabetes. The metabolic syndrome has become increasingly common in the United States. It's estimated that over 50 million Americans have it.

The dominant underlying risk factors for this syndrome appear to be abdominal obesity and insulin resistance. Insulin resistance is a generalized metabolic disorder, in which the body can't use insulin efficiently. This is why the metabolic syndrome is also called the insulin resistance syndrome.

Other conditions associated with the syndrome include physical inactivity, aging, hormonal imbalance and genetic predisposition.

Some people are genetically predisposed to insulin resistance. Acquired factors, such as excess body fat and physical inactivity, can elicit insulin resistance and the metabolic syndrome in these people. Most people with insulin resistance have abdominal obesity. The biologic mechanisms at the molecular level between insulin resistance and metabolic risk factors aren't fully understood and appear to be complex.

How is the metabolic syndrome diagnosed?

There are no well-accepted criteria for diagnosing the metabolic syndrome. The criteria proposed by the National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP) Adult Treatment Panel III (ATP III), with minor modifications, are currently recommended and widely used.

The American Heart Association and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recommend that the metabolic syndrome be identified as the presence of three or more of these components:

- Elevated waist circumference: Men — Equal to or greater than 40 inches (102 cm) Women — Equal to or greater than 35 inches (88 cm)
- Elevated triglycerides: Equal to or greater than 150 mg/dL
- Reduced HDL ("good") cholesterol: Men — Less than 40 mg/dL Women — Less than 50 mg/dL
- Elevated blood pressure: Equal to or greater than 130/85 mm Hg
- Elevated fasting glucose: Equal to or greater than 100 mg/dL



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Recommendation for Managing the Metabolic Syndrome:

The primary goal of clinical management of the metabolic syndrome is to reduce the risk for cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. Then, the first-line therapy is to reduce the major risk factors for cardiovascular disease: stop smoking and reduce LDL cholesterol, blood pressure and glucose levels to the recommended levels.

For managing both long- and short-term risk, lifestyle therapies are the first-line interventions to reduce the metabolic risk factors. These lifestyle interventions include:

- Weight loss to achieve a desirable weight (BMI less than 25 kg/m²)
- Increased physical activity, with a goal of at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity on most days of the week
- Healthy eating habits that include reduced intake of saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol

(Source: American Heart Association; <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4756>)



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Suggestions for Congregations to Promote Wellness

Wellness Sunday

Celebrate and promote wellness with a special Sunday that focuses on how faith and wellness relate. Include hymns and prayers that help the congregation reflect on the unity of mind, body and spirit. Invite members of the congregation to share their own understanding of wellness.

Some relevant scripture might include:

- Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.
1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and carefully protects and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, Because we are members (parts) of His body.
Ephesians 5:29-30
- Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.
1 Peter 3:3-4
- A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones.
Proverbs 15: 30

Listserve

Create a listserve that congregants may join. Send weekly emails that are spiritual, physical and mental encouragement for individuals to commit to lifestyle changes of increasing activity and decreasing consumption. Congregations can use the email messages in church bulletins, newsletters, etc. The messages themselves can make excellent devotions, Bible study, or meditations.

Support Groups

Life style changes are difficult for individuals to make. In order to have a greater chance of success, support groups are essential. Groups may take on a variety of forms. Just by having regular time together, individuals can experience support through sharing with others struggling with similar health changes.

Activity Groups

There is always more fun when we do things together! Walking groups help individuals stay motivated and also make exercise more fun. Congregations can invite exercise classes to meet in the church building. This is also a way to invite people in the community into our congregations.

Healthy Eating

Potlucks have long been known for the delicious casseroles and wonderful desserts! Why not also make your congregations' potlucks known for having healthy choices? Serve frozen yogurt in addition to ice cream. Find delicious low-calorie casseroles to share. Have a taste testing contest to see whose recipe is the congregations' best healthy choice. Promote healthy eating by having a cooking class at your church., One time classes could focus on cooking for people with special diets (diabetes, low-salt, etc.). Provide healthy snacks for children and youth activities.



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Healthy Mission Activity

As congregations plan mission activities, be sure to include ideas that promote healthy living. Plan a Walk for Hunger. Not only would the congregation raise money by collecting from walk sponsors, but the congregation would also have the opportunity to meet some of its walking goals. This is also a tremendous opportunity for fellowship and education members about ethical food choices.

Heath Fairs

Health fairs are a great way to increase awareness about health issues and also encourage people to do some simple screening for potential health risks. Invite medical providers to give medical screenings for cholesterol, blood pressure, BMI, bone density, hearing, visions, pulmonary function and dental issues. In addition, screenings can include blood glucose screenings. Parish nurses report they have often been successful in identifying people with diabetes who were not aware they had diabetes before the screenings.

Encourage local health organizations that provide assistance to others to exhibit and participate. Plan min-cooking events that encourage healthy eating. Provide healthy eating samples. Raise awareness about health risks by passing out brochures about a variety of diseases.

Health Fairs can be advertised to the entire community. A district or a cluster of churches can work together to make this a special day-log event. Finally, encourage people to attend by providing a healthy meal at no charge. One idea is to provide a potato bar with healthy toppings. Folks come to get the free meal , which increases attendance. Everyone goes home with lots of information.

Wellness Retreat

Wellness is not just a physical issue. Wellness is emotion, mental, and spiritual, too. Plan a retreat that focuses on wellness. Weave together healthy eating and exercise with Bible readings and spiritual reflection. Encourage people to think about how their own lifestyle choices affect their wellness. Congregations could enjoy men's and women's one day retreats with the sole purpose of relaxation and fellowship. Enjoy a healthy meal together and just spend the day relaxing. This is very good for our health.

Parish Nursing

Encourage your congregation to start a parish nursing program. Parish nursing embraces the spiritual, physical, psychological and social dimensions of the nursing practice. In essence, parish nurses care for the mind, body, and spirit. In collaboration with the faith community leasers, the parish nurse works to form partnership with other community health resources. Parish nursing services are designed to involve individuals, families and congregations as active partners in their personal health and wellness.

Group Health Challenges

Challenge members of your church to adopt healthy living and behaviors for wellness of mind, body and spirit. Offer meditations and encouragement over listserves as well as encourage members to pledge to commit. Remind congregants of sample wellness actions:

- Get an annual physical**
- Write a real letter**
- Eat a healthy snack**
- Read Scriptures**
- Take a walk**
- Refuse plastic bags**
- Eliminate soda for a day**

- Turn down a dessert**
- Say "I'm sorry."**
- Volunteer for a task**
- Go on a family picnic**
- Play Scrabble or a family game**
- Read a daily devotional**
- Watch a funny movie**





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Sample Health Promotion Classes That May Be Given

1. Aging Process and How to Manage
2. Healthy Eating
3. Exercise Suitable for Age
4. Prayer/Meditation
5. Faith and Spirituality's Effect on Physical and Mental Health
6. Helping Your Physician Manage Your Illness
7. Death and Dying

Support Groups

Support groups will be developed to meet the interest of the greatest number of people. Please indicate if you would participate in any of the following:

Loneliness

Weight Control

Substance Abuse

Loss and Grief

Living with Chronic Illness/Disease

Living Alone



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Sample Group Challenge Ideas

300 Day Challenge Chart (The Church of the Brethren challenged members to one Healthy Habits per day for 300 days in honor of their 300th Anniversary. Sample Healthy Habits include:

- Get an annual physical
- Say "I'm sorry."
- Read Scriptures
- Play Scrabble or a family game
- Eliminate soda for a day

- Turn down a dessert
- Eat a healthy snack
- Go on a family picnic
- Refuse plastic bags
- Watch a funny movie

- Write a real letter
- Volunteer for a task
- Take a walk
- Read a daily devotional
- Ride a bike

Congregants marked with an X on the chart for each day they participated in something healthy. At the end of the challenge, they could turn in their sheets for a healthful incentive reward. This example is for 120 days.

1					
			10		
					1/4 done!
			1/3 done!		
		45			
					Halfway!
					2/3 done!
		100			
					Congrats!!





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Sample Call to Sign-Up Group Challenge Form

Adapted from the Lighten Up, Brethren program

This is a call for us to love our own bodies, minds, and Spirit is as God loves us.

In Romans 12:1, THE Bible states, "Therefor...I implore you by God's mercy to offer your very selves to him: a loving sacrifice, dedicated and fit for his acceptance, the worship offered by mind and spirit." Paul also speaks of the physical body as the temple of God, because when we belong to him, he dwells in us.

Good stewardship of one's physical body is both worship and good witness. Anyone who has been tested with serious health problems will attest to the emotional and sometimes spiritual distress that can bring. Being physically well— as well as possible— is a great blessing often overlooked.

The Wellness Ministry understands every human being is a unity of body, mind and spirit. We recognize that doing things together is a cornerstone of congregational worship. Whether you are in great shape, or need to get in shape, we are all connected. You are invited to commit to lifestyle changes of increasing activity and decreasing consumption.

New Concerns to Spur Us to Work on Physical Health

In the last year, news reports have focused on how unhealthy the American population has become. At the same time, medical reports indicate a growing concern about **Metabolic Syndrome**.

Metabolic Syndrome is a cluster of disorders of the body's metabolism. These disorders of high blood pressure, high insulin levels, excess body weight, and abnormal cholesterol levels make individuals more likely to develop heart disease, diabetes or stroke. Recent studies have shown that this syndrome is common and becoming more prevalent. As many as one in four American adults and 40% of adults age 40 and older have metabolic syndrome. Individuals with three or more of the following traits may be experiencing signs of Metabolic Syndrome:

1. **Obesity**— Measured as a waist circumference of greater than 35 inches for women and 40 inches for men.
2. **High Blood Pressure**— Higher than 130/85.
3. **Resistance to Insulin**— Fasting blood sugar level greater than 110.
4. **One or More Abnormal Cholesterol Levels**— a level of "good" (HDL) cholesterol lower than 50 mg/dL for women and 40 mg/dL for men.
5. **Elevated Triglyceride Levels**— Higher than 150 mg/dL .

Contact your physician for an evaluation of your current health and for help in developing an appropriate regime of self-care strategies focusing on diet and exercise to treat Metabolic Syndrome.



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Sample Call to Sign-Up Group Challenge Form

Adapted from the Lighten Up, Brethren program

Name _____

Church _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

I accept the challenge and intend to work on: (circle all that apply)

- Regular exercise* : I hope to participate in/ exercise so that _____

- Weight Loss*: I intend to lose ____ pounds or inches by _____
- Weight Control: I seek to maintain my weight within the next year.
- Other _____

I would like to:

- receive emails from our Listserve.
- Receive a reminder of my goal prior to (pick applicable date to your ministry program)
- Report my progress so that my data may be added to ministry records (without naming names) so the cumulative effect of the Wellness Ministry may be measured,

****Please consult with your doctor before beginning any weight control/ exercise program.
Your responses are confidential.**

