# FAMILY WELLNESS

## What is Family Wellness?

- The Family Wellness program teaches practical skills based on proven principles that strengthen, uphold and empower individuals, couples and families in order to promote healthy relationships.

## Who designed Family Wellness and why?

- Virginia Scott and George Doub founded Family Wellness in East San Jose and Santa Cruz, California in 1980. Its focus has been on low-income multi-cultural communities.

- Virginia Scott has been recognized as one of the leading family therapists in the country. Family Circle, Redbook, Parenting, and McCall's magazines have interviewed her as an expert on family issues.

- George Doub has been a marriage and family counselor for over 30 years and is prominent consultant on social services.

## What are the founding principles of Family Wellness?

- Family Wellness believes in order for families to reclaim their pivotal role in providing for the health of their members, they need new tools and supports to handle the challenges in our present society.

- Family Wellness strives to translate the knowledge and skills of family therapy into a readily available and effective program to help families.

## How long has Family Wellness existed?

- Family Wellness has been in existence since 1980.

## What research findings support Family Wellness?

- In 1986, Paul Giblan conducted a meta-analysis of some 85 studies of pre-marital, marital, and family enrichment programs to evaluate the empirical evidence from 3886 participants. His findings support all of the structure and skills taught by Family Wellness: behavioral rehearsal, coaching and role play, co-leadership, 12 hours in total length, communication skills, and problem solving skills.

- Several studies were conducted at the Alum Rock Counseling Center in the 1990s using the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES II). Through a sampling of pre and post tests, it was concluded that families generally felt more connected, individuals reported feeling more flexible and less structured, and the educational workshop approach does seem to promote healthier functioning in all family types.

- A study done by the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention project in Santa Cruz utilized a before and after follow up study which included the Moos Family Environment Scale. This study indicated through a six month follow up phone evaluation that more than 70% of the participants (60 called) continued to experience improved communication skills; over 35% indicated reduced or eliminated drug use; 80% considered the family to be "closer"; and 25% felt the family was solving problems better.

## Who attends Family Wellness?

- Over 1,500 trained instructors have presented this program to over 500,000 families.

- The Family Wellness program has been used for couples retreats, marital therapy, and couples enrichment.

**Is Family Wellness offered for special populations?**

- The Family Wellness program has also been used for low income families, families in the military, faith based communities, school parental involvement, child abuse prevention and intervention, domestic violence prevention and intervention, drug and alcohol abuse prevention and intervention, family preservation, and by a number of gang prevention and community based programs.

- Family Wellness is being used by Native Americans, Latinos, African Americans, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, Chinese, and Filipino communities.

- In addition, a number of refugee programs throughout the country have chosen Family Wellness as the model for their communities including Kurdish, Somali, Hmong, Latino, Serbian, Ugandan, and Russian refugees.

**Who facilitates Family Wellness?**

- First, instructors are selected to fit a particular community's language and experience needs (e.g., Latino, or single parent, or blended family).

- The instructors are then required to take a 40 hour training course that models the skills and experiences of Family Wellness. The course is designed for school personnel, teachers, ministers, mental health and employee assistance workers, and others interested in assisting families.

- The training course is taught in six sessions. First, trainers demonstrate the program, while the trainees experience the individual and group exercises and role-plays just as program participants would in the community.

- Then, the trainees present aspects of the program to the training group. Trainees are videotaped in order to simulate a live presentation.

- After completion of the Instructor Training course, certified instructors may attend one of the advanced instructor trainings in the specialized areas of **Families Impacted by Domestic Violence and Abuse** and the **Wellness Way for Stepfamilies**. These trainings have been designed to provide instructors with the information and skills necessary to meet the specific needs of these families.

**What skills and knowledge will I learn from Family Wellness?**

- There are six core sessions that include content on:
    - communications skills
    - problem solving
    - knowing personal values and goals as well as couple goals
    - money management
    - intimacy
    - paying back your community with the skills you've learned.

- Additional lesson plans are included for:
    - Stepfamilies
    - Parent and In-law issues
    - Domestic Violence
    - Parenting as a Couple

- New and Expectant Parents
- Separations from military deployment, business, health or jail

- There are **9 Key Elements** of the program:

  1. Instructors chosen to fit the particular community's language and experience needs (e.g., Hispanic, or single parent, or blended family).

  2. Locations chosen that support families and provide and on-going "teamwork" with parents such as schools and churches.

  3. Family Participation – all members from children through extended family and support systems are invited and attend the series.

  4. Simple rules that capture basic theory and put it in words and concepts that make it memorable and usable for families and individuals.

  5. Dramatic Role-Play of real family situations, problems, and ways of working through those problems that make the content believable and applicable.

  6. Coaching of family members in their own real-life "stuck" places or problem areas. Participants are brought up front to play out their usual ways of handling a particular issue or problem, then given new options and coaching to help those options work.

  7. Visual Aids that reinforce what is taught and give clear and simple anchors for participants to learn the theory and skills.

  8. Exercises that reinforce the content and skills with support and the "truths" that participants have to share with each other.

  9. Materials that reinforce the content and skills with activities, interactive exercises, video, and audiotapes that present the series with exercises for home use or with a facilitator.

**What type of format is Family Wellness offered in?**

- Survival Skills for Healthy Families is presented in six, two-hour sessions which encourage maximum participation and integration of the skills. Each session is organized to demonstrate and then to practice the skills using role play, coaching and activities.

**Testimonials**

"Really I thought that these groups wouldn't be interesting and enjoyable, I was really wrong…. I'm thankful for these groups because I've made many mistakes in the past, it's great to have you to help prevent them from happening."

"I wanted to learn new things, I can't wait to come back in October."

"It turned our relationship 180 degrees."

"I really love this class. I wish it hadn't ended yet. They did a role-play that actually goes on in life. I can still learn so much."

**What is the contact information for Family Wellness?**

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