



Wespath

BENEFITS | INVESTMENTS

a general agency of The United Methodist Church

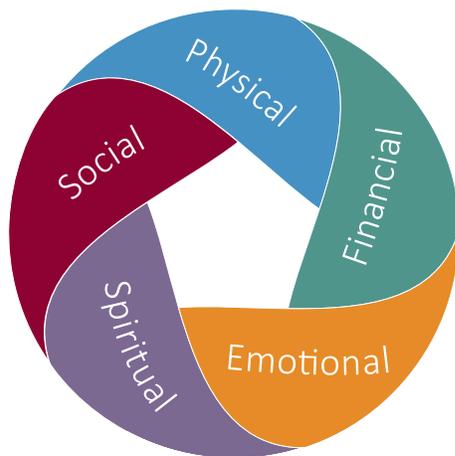


Healthy Annual Conference Toolkit

We are here to support your well-being at Annual Conference!

Annual Conference is a time of gathering, worship, seeing friends and colleagues, and having good conversations. It can also be stressful weeding through a packed agenda, traversing difficult topics and sitting for long periods of time.

Here are some simple suggestions to make your meeting a healthier one in each of the 5 dimensions of well-being.



Physical Dimension

Ideas for Physical Activity:



- **Stretch breaks**—Schedule breaks every 2 hours if possible and join our stretch break selfie campaign and post your conference’s stretch break selfie on Facebook and Twitter. Use the hashtag #StretchBreakSelfieUMC. If the well-being team will be at your annual conference to help with Blueprint for Wellness® screenings we will be happy to lead stretch breaks. Or, use the Wespath stretch break or deskercise videos found here: wespath.org/benefits/stretch-break-videos/ and here: wespath.org/benefits/deskercise-videos/
- **Plan group walks** in the morning before sessions start and in the evening to wind down from a productive day. A 20–30 minute walk helps attendees process the day’s events, and provides social, physical and emotional outlets
- **Plan a Virgin Pulse® step contest** during the event. Check for directions on the Wespath extranet or contact us for help setting this up. Place markers around the facility that say “Here ___ to There ___” equals 200 steps
- **Plan a Hulapalooza!** Check out Global Ministries’ fun fitness craze and other resources here: umcabundantthealth.org/hulapalooza/

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Physical Dimension

Ideas for Nutrition:

- **Offer whole fruit.** Bananas and apples are always in season, cost effective and easy to eat on the go
- Ask vendors to **provide non-food alternatives** such as pens, pencils, note pads, or small games in lieu of candy on their tables
- **Do not offer soda or have limited quantities.** If you feel it is important to have soda, make it less convenient by placing further away from the entrance to the plenary sessions
- **Offer an abundance of water.** Give a reusable water bottle as a gift or ask participants to bring a water bottle to reduce waste while promoting water consumption
- **Healthy snack break ideas**—hummus and pita, veggie sticks, almonds, single serving trail mix, fresh fruit
- **Offer fresh fruit as a dessert option**
- **If there is a tradition around a food item** that is not healthy, such as a special donut, cookie or ice cream, consider offering for shorter period of time, have smaller serving sizes or place farther away

Emotional Dimension



- **Create quiet space** at the conference hotel/location, outside or other peaceful setting for stretching, meditation or reflection
- **Work with a spiritual director** to offer guided deep breathing and prayer or an early morning workout
- Consider an **onsite EAP** opportunity—work with Wespath's well-being team to determine feasibility at your event
- **Create an emotional Healthy Habit Challenge through Virgin Pulse** (coordinate with Wespath's well-being team for more details/ideas)

Resources

- Faith, Activity and Nutrition program helps churches improve the well-being of congregations. For more information: prevention.sph.sc.edu/projects/fanumc.htm
- Local universities, colleges and trade schools can provide a number of low cost programs including Registered Dietitian, Exercise Physiologist, massage therapist for chair massages, yoga and exercise focused classes or lectures
- **Myplate.gov** has great tips, resources and ideas
- The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' web page eatright.org has great suggestions around healthy cooking and eating
- Wespath Benefits and Investments has resources to help you improve well-being, and plan a healthier annual conference. Go to wespath.org/benefits/information/ for toolkits, handouts and more

Spiritual Dimension



- Set aside space for a **prayer room**
- **Encourage breath prayer**—put the steps on a handout or as a bookmark
- **Create a spiritual Healthy Habit Challenge through Virgin Pulse** (coordinate with Wespath's well-being team for more details/ideas)

Social Dimension



- **Set aside time to connect** and mingle before and after meals
- Offer an easy way to **share random acts of kindness** such as putting prayer cards and thank you notes out for people to write on and share, or having "shout outs" of thanks before or after sessions
- **Provide games** like Jenga, Pick-Up Sticks and Jacks for quick connection-making, or more intense board games such as checkers or chess in sitting areas
- **Create a social Healthy Habit Challenge through Virgin Pulse** (coordinate with Wespath's well-being team for more details/ideas)

Financial Dimension



- **Provide materials to educate** on financial well-being, retirement, paying down student loans, buying a house, budgeting, understanding health accounts (order resources from Wespath with your annual meeting requests)
- **Explore local resources** for financial education or literacy
- Set aside space for participants to listen to a **Wespath webinar series**
- **Create a financial Healthy Habit Challenge through Virgin Pulse** (coordinate with Wespath's well-being team for more details/ideas)