

Victoria and South Island Divisions of Family Practice Physician Health and Wellness Program

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10 Takeaways for Starting a Community Physician Wellness Group:

- 1. Start small, but stay steady.** A consistent, reliable presence builds more trust and engagement than one-off events. Regular offerings show that the work—and the people behind it—are here to stay.
- 2. Let the community lead.** Wellness is most meaningful when shaped by those it serves. Build a physician- (or peer-) led model supported by a strong, dependable backbone team to handle logistics and coordination.
- 3. Foster psychological safety.** Transparent governance, thoughtful planning, and clear communication allow people to show up authentically, share openly, and feel safe being vulnerable.
- 4. Think beyond “self-care.”** Recognize that burnout is rooted in systemic pressures, not personal weakness. Community wellness efforts should acknowledge these realities while offering support and connection.
- 5. Cultivate diverse forms of wellbeing.** Wellness isn’t one-size-fits-all. Use a “dimensions of wellness” lens to design varied programming—social, emotional, physical, professional, spiritual—that meets different needs.
- 6. Make connection your core strategy.** Social connection is a powerful protective factor against distress. Create spaces—formal or casual—where people can belong, share, and be seen.
- 7. Grow through feedback.** Keep listening. Evaluate your initiatives, ask participants what they need, and adapt continuously. Feedback helps your work grow in the right direction.
- 8. Include everyone in the ecosystem.** Be intentional about engaging underrepresented groups and newer members of your community. Inclusion strengthens both the roots and the reach of your wellness work.
- 9. Collaborate across boundaries.** Break down silos between organizations or specialties. Partnership multiplies impact and helps build a shared culture of care and support.
- 10. Tend your own garden, too.** Wellness work is relational. As you nurture your community, remember to replenish yourself. The most resilient gardens are cared for by well-nourished gardeners.

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