

SKILLS EXPLORATION DAYS DESIGN CHALLENGE

Healthy Communities by Design

Overview

The World Health Organization's definition of health is "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."¹ Health encompasses far more than just eating your vegetables and avoiding the common cold. Health and well-being include physical, mental, social, and environmental factors that all contribute to your quality of life. Supporting each aspect of your health helps you enjoy your life, perform your best, and take on new challenges. Some aspects of health are easier to control than others, and each person's experience with health and wellness looks different.

Design Rationale

There are many ways to enhance people's health and well-being at the individual, community, and policy levels.² Innovations in the field of personal wellness have taken off in the past decade with health trackers, such as smart watches, becoming the norm. What attracts many people to these types of innovations is a focus on preventative health. While many people know a healthy diet and exercise are important for physical health, it can be hard to start new habits. Personalized health solutions, such as fitness smart watches and apps, encourage people to focus on their health goals by giving daily reminders and motivation.

More than we realize, our health and well-being is shaped by the communities in which we live and spend our time. Healthy Homes Healthy Communities states that "only 20% of Canadians live in neighbourhoods that are considered 'amenity dense'. This is defined as access to at least one grocery store, pharmacy, childcare facility, school, library, health facility, employment, and public transit stop."³ Communities can provide well-being and care for residents by ensuring access to these amenities, but location and resources are often a limiting factor.

Other ways communities can support well-being and encourage healthy habits are by "improving the quality and safety of public spaces to favour mental health, physical activity, and social cohesion."⁴ An example of intentional public space design is seen in many cities across the world with "fitness parks". By installing free outdoor fitness equipment, people gain greater access to engage in physical activity, spend time in nature, and socialize with others.⁵

Problem Scenario

Your team has been selected to improve health and well-being in your community. Identify a health or well-being challenge that affects people in your school or community, then create a solution that helps people live healthier, safer, or happier lives.

Choose a challenge related to physical, mental, social, or environmental well-being. Design and build a prototype or scale model that encourages healthy habits or addresses a community need. This design challenge will require your team to innovate something new or re-design an existing solution to make it better.

Your solution should:

- Address a real health or well-being issue in your community.
- Be practical and accessible for the people who will use it.
- Be safe, inclusive, welcoming, and easy to understand.
- Be supported by research or evidence (the goal of your solution should be generally accepted as something that improves one's health and well-being)

Success Determinants

Success will be determined by the degree to which your design solution:

- ☐ Addresses the design challenge
- ☐ Addresses an identifiable need
- ☐ **Is original** (not an exact copy of something that already exists) **and as realistic as possible.**
- ☐ Utilizes the tools and materials provided in a creative and safe manner
- ☐ Aligns to the design motto: *Make it smaller, stronger, do more, be easier to use, be cheaper.*

***Prototype:** a model that illustrates the functionality of an idea or design. It may be life-sized or scaled to a model that fits in your hand.



SUGGESTED RESOURCES TO GET YOU STARTED

What is Health? ¹	
Healthy Community Essentials ²	
Neighbourhood Design ³	
Sustainable Development Goal 3: Health & Wellbeing ⁴	
Active Parks, Active People? ⁵	
Community Wellbeing Framework	
The Science of Healthier Cities: Three Strategies for Architects	
Healthy Communities by Design	
What is Wellbeing?	
The Future of Personal Wellness Innovation	
My Community, My Health	