The Illness-Wellness Continuum
The Illness-Wellness Continuum

What is a paradigm?
A paradigm is a frame of reference. It is the way we perceive, understand and interpret the world.

“A paradigm is like a map in our head.”
We assume that the way we “see” things is the way they really are or the way they should be.
Paradigm Shift

A paradigm shift is a way of looking at something differently.

- We are stepping “outside the box”.
  
  When we make a paradigm shift we can see, think, feel and behave differently.

Example:

Mrs. Smith thought Jake was just a bad seed.

Mr. Davis believed Jake’s behavior was due to his parent’s divorce. (a paradigm shift occurred)
Iceberg Model

Illness and Health are only the tip of an iceberg

- To understand their causes you must look below the surface.
- Icebergs reveal only about one-tenth of their mass above the water. Your current state of health, be it one of disease or vitality, is just like the tip of the iceberg
To understand what creates and supports your current state of health, you have to look underwater.

This is the apparent part - what shows. If you don't like it you can attempt to change it, do things to it, chisel away at an unwanted condition. But, whenever you knock some off, more of the same comes up to take its place.

The first level encountered below the waterline is the lifestyle/behavioral level – what you eat, how to use and exercise your body, how you relax and let go of stress, and how you safeguard yourself from the hazards around you.

To understand what creates and supports your current state of health, you have to look underwater.
Many people follow lifestyles that they know are destructive to their own well-being, to the people around them and to the planet. Yet many feel powerless to change the way they live.

To understand, it is necessary to look deeper, to the next cultural/psychological/motivational level. Here we find what moves us to lead the lifestyle we’ve chosen. We learn how our cultural norms and our families influence us in subtle yet powerful ways from a very early age.

We can become conscious of any ongoing psychological payoffs we have that are based on early life experiences and, ultimately what their cost is to our physical and mental well-being.
.. below the cultural/psychological/motivational level, there is the deepest spiritual/being/meaning level. It includes the mystical, mysterious, metaphysical, and everything else in the subconscious mind and concerns such issues as your reason for being, the meaning of life, and your place in the universe.

How you address these questions, and the answers you choose underlie and permeate all levels above.

The realm ultimately determines whether the tip of the iceberg, representing your state of health, will be one of disease or wellness.
Cultural norms

- behavior patterns that are typical of specific groups.
- learned from parents, teachers, peers, and many others whose values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors take place in the context of their own organizational culture.
- Some norms are healthy and some are not. (Some contribute to the betterment of individuals, families, and communities)

Cultural norms often are so strongly ingrained in an individual's daily life that the individual may be unaware of certain behaviors. Until these behaviors are seen in the context of a different culture with different values and beliefs, the individual may have difficulty recognizing and changing them.
Wellness Energy System

• A human being is an open system
• We take in energy from all the sources around us, organize it, transform it, and return (dissipate) it to the environment around us
• The is that efficient flow of energy is essential to wellness; disease is the result of any interference with this flow. This is true of energy usage in all life processes, from breathing to dying.
You are a...

- channel of energy - energy flowing in, coursing around, and flowing out.

- And because you are different from every other channel" walking around, it goes without saying that your condition (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual) is going to determine how much you take in, what it feels like inside, and how it moves out into the environment.

- When the flow is balanced and smooth, you feel good.

- When there is interference at any point - the input, the output, or in between - you can feel empty, confused, pressured, or blocked.

- Illness is often the result.
Ex: Water through a pipe

- Size and condition of the pipe are key to flow: Good input, clear passageways = great output.
Input of Environmental Influences

Sources of Input:

You have at least three major sources for input around you all the time.

1) oxygen
2) food
3) sensory stimulation such as physical touch, heat, light, sound, etc..

• Plus:
  emotional/spiritual information such as attention, caring, love, enthusiasm, and more.
Internal Output

- your education and beliefs
- previous experience
- the activity of your nervous system
- your flexibility
- strength
- body weight
- emotional development
- muscle tension
- general state of health
- Sensitivity
- open-mindedness
- self-love

We use part of the energy we take in to
- maintain the channel
- to build and repair the body itself (much of it occurs during our all-important sleep periods)

- This is the internal output.

Putting together the input and output, we have the complete Wellness Energy System