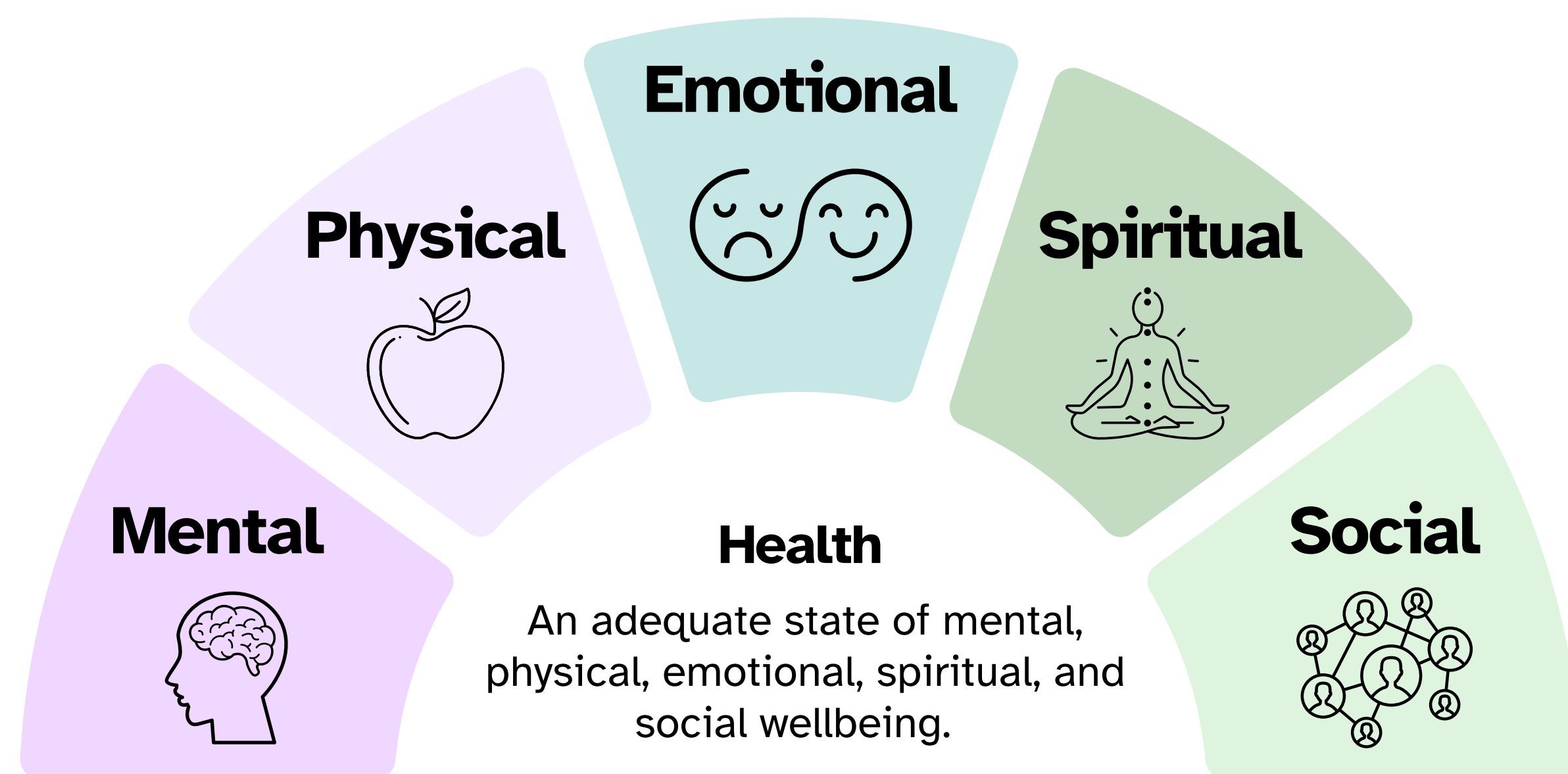


Health & Wellness



Wellness:
The behaviours, activities, and choices that promote health.



Dimensions of Health & Wellness

Visit our Self-Care infographic to learn more:
decyde.ca/mental-health-and-well-being/

Mental health is a dimension of health that helps people cope with stress, realize their abilities, learn, and contribute to their community.

Mental wellness can be promoted by:

- Practicing self-care
- Regular body movement
- Eating a well-balanced diet
- Social interaction, such as through leisure activities
- Healthy, positive relationships with family and school
- Access to supportive resources, like counselling
- Making informed choices about substance use

Physical health looks different for everyone. It includes the function of body parts, systems, and senses with consideration of disease, disability, and age.

Physical wellness can be promoted by:

- Regular body movement
- Eating a well-balanced diet
- Drinking plenty of water
- Getting enough sleep
- Making informed choices about substance use



Did you know that engaging in a wellness activity or behaviour can improve multiple dimensions of health?

Emotional health includes being aware of our emotions and having the ability to cope with them.

Emotional wellness can be promoted by:

- Talking with a supportive person about emotional concerns
- Practicing self-kindness
- Having a strong support network

Spiritual health refers to our sense of purpose in life.

Spiritual wellness can be promoted by:

- A faith or belief system
- Creating one's own spiritual purpose

Social health includes the ability to make and maintain relationships with others, as well as understanding appropriate behaviour in social situations.

Social wellness can be promoted by:

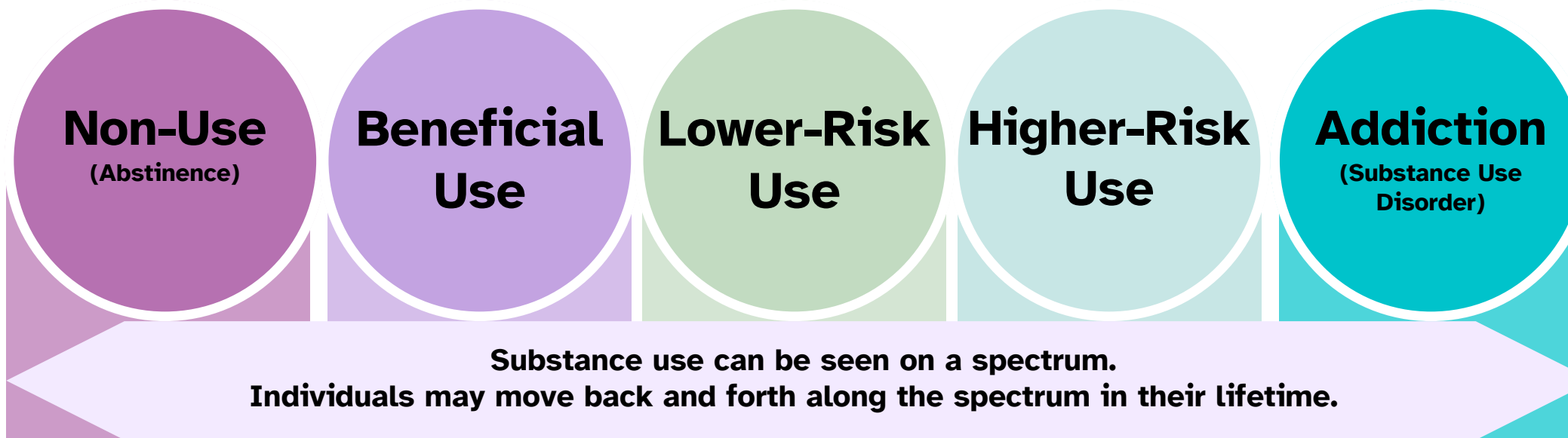
- Making new friends
- Increasing in-person interactions
- Joining extracurricular activities to socialize with others

The Relationship Between Substances and Health & Wellness

People use substances for different reasons:

- to help with mental, physical, or emotional health
- coping with stress, trauma, or pain
- to socialize
- for spiritual/ceremonial practices

- Substance use can have an impact on our health and wellness.
- Our health and wellness can influence whether we use substances.
- **These effects can be positive or negative** and can vary based on how frequently an individual uses a substance.



Learn more about the Substance Use Spectrum:
decyde.ca/substance-use-spectrum-2/

The Impact of Substance Use on Health and Wellness

Medical Use of Substances

- Many people take substances prescribed by a healthcare practitioner to manage or treat physical or mental health conditions.
- This can have a positive effect on our health and wellness by improving symptoms and our quality of life.
- For example, a person with ADHD may be prescribed methylphenidate to improve their concentration, which may help them do better in school or at work.
- When taken as prescribed this can improve our health and wellness (e.g., taking prescribed dose, avoiding interacting drugs).



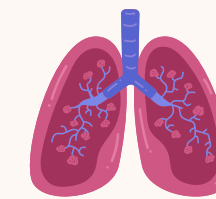
Health Impacts of Substance Use

- Substance use for self-medication or recreational purposes can lead to short and long-term health effects.
- The health risks associated with substance use increases with more frequent use.

Substance use can affect **mental health** by triggering anxiety, depression, psychosis, or schizophrenia.



Substance use can impact **physical health** by:



Damaging vital organs such as the heart, liver, lungs, and kidneys.



Increasing one's risk of developing diseases such as HIV or hepatitis C through sharing needles or pipes.

Self-medication occurs when people use substances that are not recommended by a healthcare professional to help manage symptoms of health conditions.

Appropriate self-medication may look like taking a recommended dose of an over-the-counter medication like ibuprofen for a headache.

Inappropriate self-medication may look like buying/using stimulants (e.g., Ritalin) from an unregulated source to manage ADHD symptoms.

Note: Self-medicating with substances for mental or emotional health is an attempt to cope with distress.

While appropriate use of drugs can help improve health conditions, substance use can also have a negative effect on health and wellness.

Substance use can affect **emotional health** by causing anxiety, loneliness, or anger.



Substance use can affect **spiritual health** by impacting one's connection to the world, themselves, and their overall purpose in life.

Self-medicating can lead to:

- Incorrect self-diagnosis
- Worsening of or developing new health conditions
- Dangerous drug interactions
- Potential adverse reactions
- Delay in seeking appropriate medical treatment
- Risk of dependence or addiction
- Masking of medical conditions



Substance use can affect **social health** by decreasing inhibitions and placing strain on peers and loved ones. This can impact family/peer relationships or one's ability to get or maintain employment, creating isolation.



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