

Results from the SU Health & Wellness Goal Survey

Shannon Monnat, Mary Kate Lee, Ashley Van Slyke, and Alex Punch

To inform its on-campus programming, Syracuse University's (SU) Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion surveyed over 600 SU faculty, staff, and undergraduate and graduate students in spring of 2019 to identify their goals related to health and wellness. Among all groups, increasing physical activity (PA) was the top health and wellness goal. However, the prevalence of other goals varied by respondent sex, race/ethnicity, and role at SU.

How Do Health & Wellness Goals Differ by SU Role?

Across all SU roles (faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students), the top health and wellness goal is to increase physical activity (see Figure 1). Over 75% of respondents in each of the four groups identified this as a goal. Over half of respondents in each group also indicated having goals to improve diet and nutrition and better manage stress. Over half of the faculty, staff, and graduate student respondents reported having a goal to get more sleep. Over half of staff, undergraduate students, and graduate students reported having a goal to better manage their weight. Graduate students also prioritized being kinder to themselves and improving their mood. These were relatively low priorities among faculty, but we encourage some caution in interpreting the faculty results given the low sample size for that group.

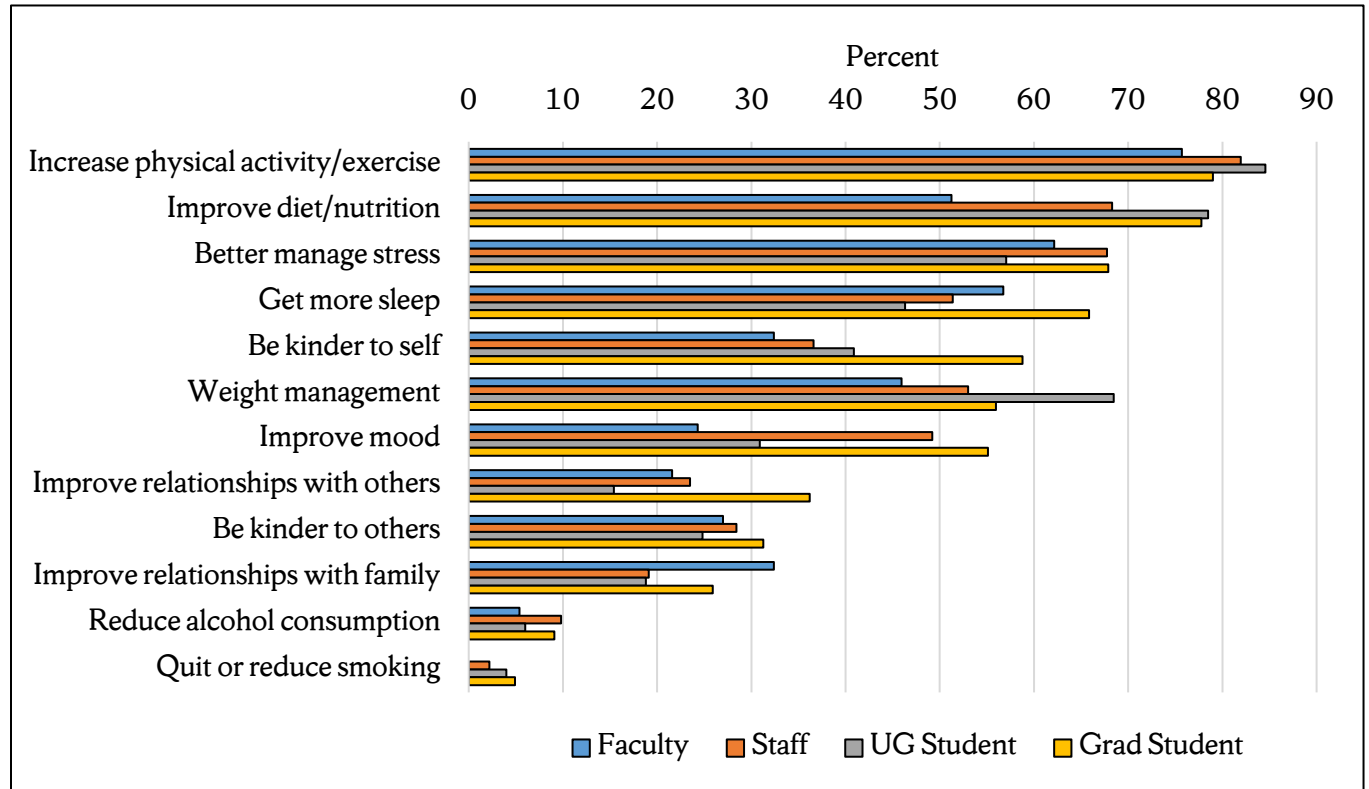
How do Health & Wellness Goals Differ by Sex?

Figure 2 shows variation in health and wellness goals by sex. Again, increasing physical activity was the top priority across all sex groups, with 84.6% of males, 80.2% of females, and 70% of those identifying their sex as 'Other' selecting this goal. Among both males and females, the next highest ranked priorities were improving diet and nutrition (68.7% of males; 76.9% of females), weight management (55% of males; 59.8% of females), stress management (53.9% of males; 69.9% of females), and getting more sleep (55.5% of males; 57.1% of females). Males were more likely than females to report having goals to improve family relationships (29.7% of males vs. 19.8% of females), improve relationships with others (31.9% of males vs. 24.1% of females), and reduce alcohol consumption (9.9% of males vs. 5.5% of females), but the percentages for all of these goals were low for both groups. Among those identifying as other sex, top priorities besides increasing physical activity, included better managing stress (70%) and being kinder to oneself (60%).

KEY FINDINGS

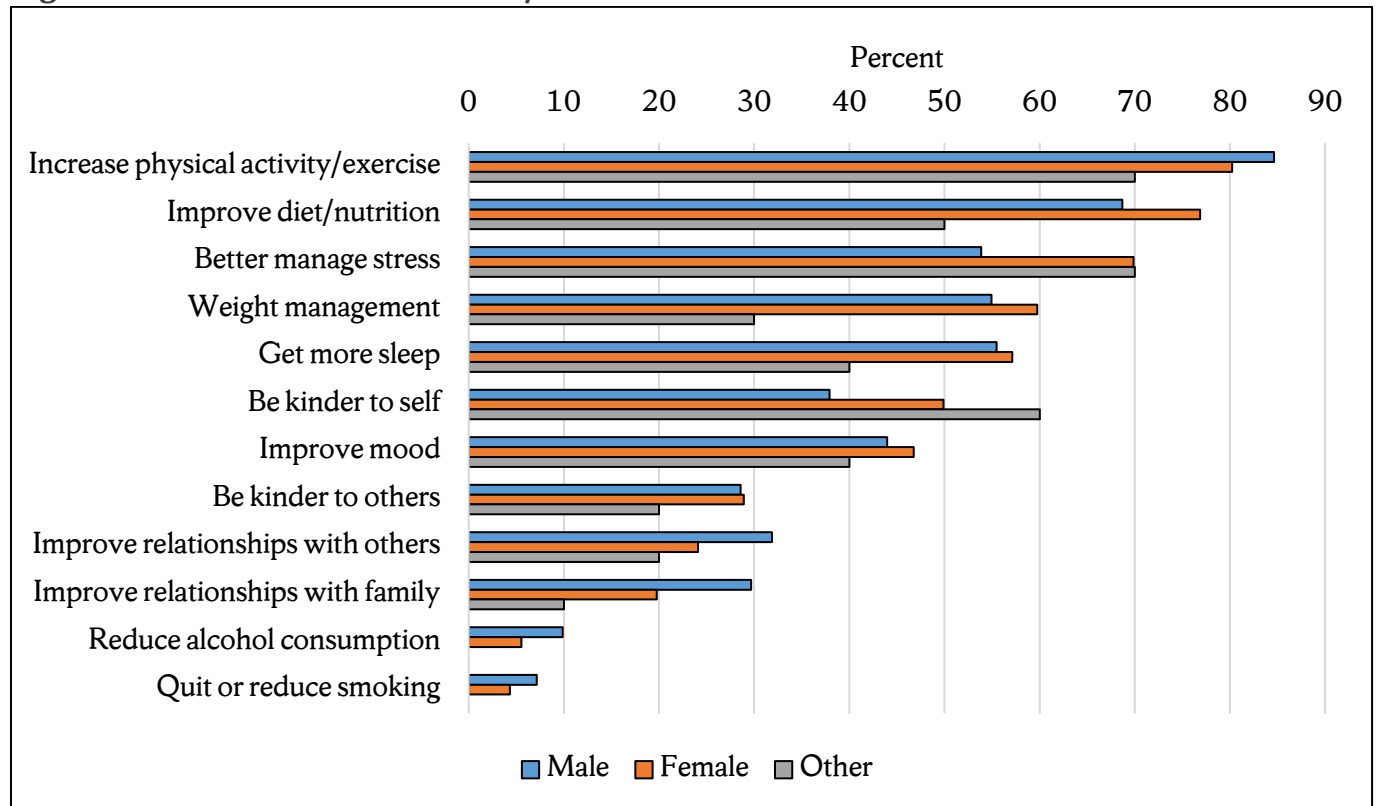
- Increasing physical activity is the top-ranked health and wellness goal at SU.
- Improving diet and nutrition and better managing stress were also highly prioritized.
- Graduate students were more likely than other groups to report having goals to be kinder to themselves and to improve their mood.
- Females were more likely than males to report having goals to improve their diet and nutrition and better manage stress.
- Males were more likely than females to report having goals to improve family relationships, improve relationships with others, and reduce alcohol consumption.

Figure 1. Health & Wellness Goals by SU Faculty Role



Data Source: Lerner Center Health & Wellness Survey 2019

Figure 2. Health & Wellness Goals by Sex

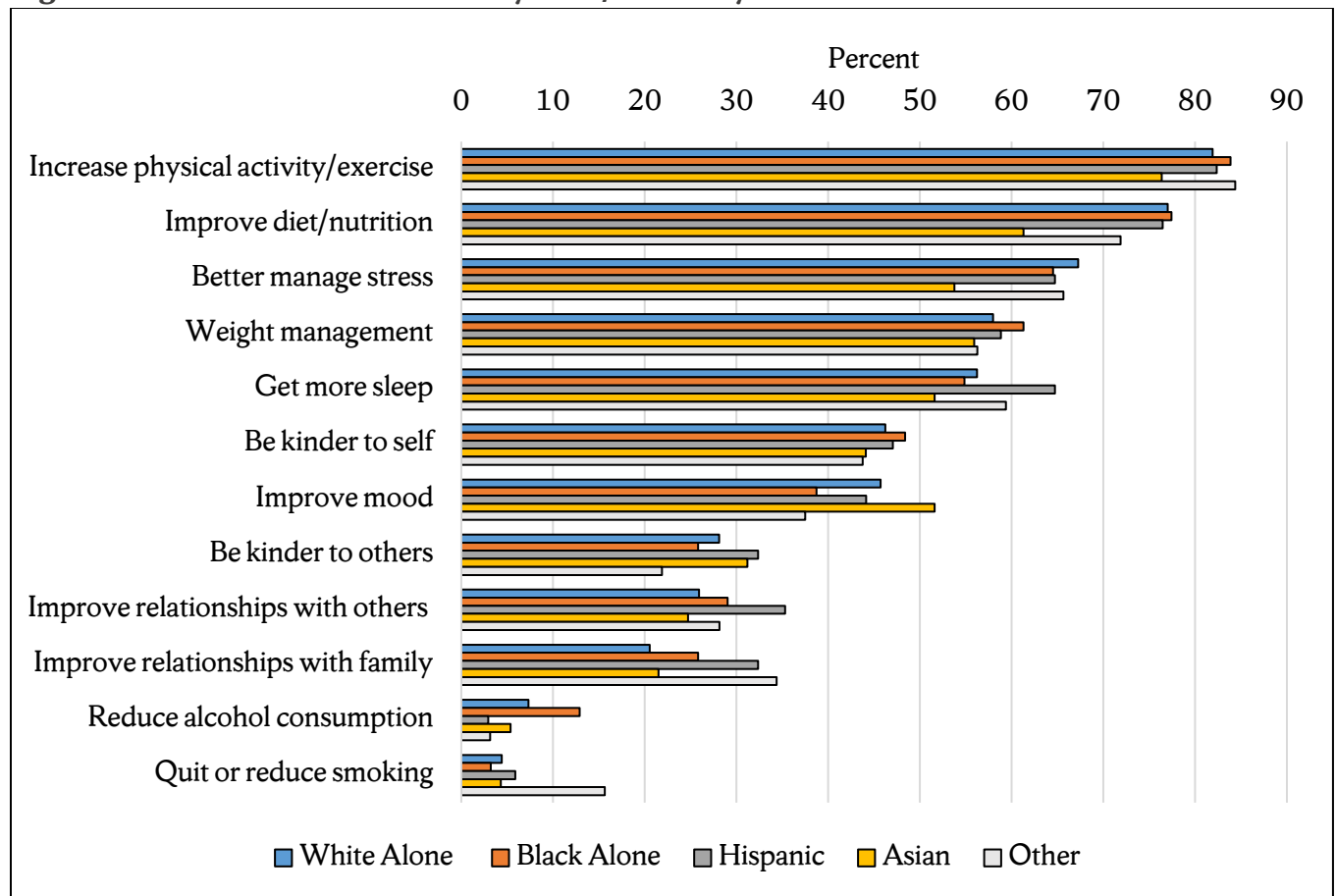


Data Source: Lerner Center Health & Wellness Survey 2019

How do Health & Wellness Goals Differ by Race/Ethnicity?

The trends from above hold when examining variation by race/ethnicity (see Figure 3). Regardless of race, top priorities included increasing physical activity, improving diet and nutrition, better managing stress, weight management, and getting more sleep. A smaller percentage of Asian respondents reported having these goals compared to the other groups, but Asians were the most likely to report having a goal to improve their mood. Hispanics and those identifying as other or mixed race were more likely than the other groups to report a goal of improving relationships with family. Although the percentages are small, black respondents were most likely to report having a goal to reduce alcohol consumption, and other/mixed race respondents were more likely than the other racial/ethnic groups to report having a goal to quit or reduce smoking.

Figure 3. Health & Wellness Goals by Race/Ethnicity



Data Source: Lerner Center Health & Wellness Survey 2019

Lerner Center Programs Can Help you Meet your Health & Wellness Goals

In sum, increasing physical activity, improving diet and nutrition, and better managing stress are top priorities within the SU community. Making progress toward these goals will also have positive impacts on other important aspects of our lives, including weight management, improving sleep and mood, and improving relationships with our families and others. The Lerner Center has a number of health and wellness opportunities for faculty, staff, and students, which we detail below.

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Programs for SU Community:

- *Group Meditation:* We provide DeStress Monday Meditation every Monday during the semester. Each participant receives a punch card during their first mediation session and wins prizes throughout the semester when they attend two, five, and nine sessions.
- *Yoga:* We offer DeStress Monday Yoga every Monday during the semester. All skill levels and faith traditions are welcome. Our current instructor is an 800-hour certified Dharma Yoga instructor.
- *Monday Miles with a Mission:* SU Campus Monday Miles with a Mission occur every other Monday throughout the semester. Each event begins with a brief talk on a health topic of interest followed by a Monday Mile around campus. Many of these miles are led by SU students and student groups. Reach out to us to arrange for your group to lead a Monday Mile!
- *Meatless Monday options throughout campus:* Meatless Monday labels highlight the plant-based options in all of the dining halls and cafes every Monday of the semester. Enjoy plant-based options throughout the week. The SU Dome also now offers plant-based options in their 'Grab n Go' stations. Look for them this basketball season!
- *DIEMlife mobile app 'Quests':* Join our community of Monday Milers by downloading the free mobile app, *DIEMlife*, and joining the Monday Mile Quest. By doing so, you can stay active throughout the week, share your progress with others, upload photos of your walks, and track your mileage. Look for other Healthy Monday programs on *DIEMlife* in the upcoming year.

Programs Specifically Designed for SU Students:

- *'DeStress for Success' Workshop Series:* This six-week workshop series is based in the science of Positive Psychology. The series aims to help students gain the necessary skills to thrive while at Syracuse University. Workshops occur on Mondays, with each week covering a different aspect of Positive Psychology and featuring DeStress Monday tips and resources. The next series will begin in Spring 2020.
- *Service-Learning Opportunities:* Undergraduate students work with the Lerner Center to develop health promotion programming and tools for broader campus, community, and national dissemination. Interested faculty and students should reach out to the Lerner Center.

For more information about or to get involved in these opportunities, please visit the Lerner Center website (<http://lernercenter.syr.edu/>) or contact Mary Kate Lee (mlee77@syr.edu).

Data and Methods

Data came from a survey developed by the Lerner Center, which was administered online through Qualtrics to a random sample of 4,000 SU faculty, staff, and students. After eliminating incomplete surveys and duplicate respondents, we had a final completion rate of 15.3% (N=612 respondents). Respondent characteristics are reported in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Characteristics of Survey Respondents

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS	N (%)
SU ROLE	
Faculty	37 (6.0)
Staff	149 (24.3)
Graduate Student	183 (29.9)
Undergraduate Student	243 (39.7)
SEX	
Male	182 (30.0)
Female	415 (68.4)
Other	10 (1.6)
RACE/ETHNICITY	
White alone	409 (68.3)
Black alone	31 (5.2)
Hispanic	34 (5.7)
Asian	93 (15.5)
Other race and mixed race	32 (5.3)

Note: Respondents who did not answer these questions are not included in the N or %

About the Authors

Shannon Monnat is the Lerner Chair for Public Health Promotion and Associate Professor of Sociology (smonnat@syr.edu). Mary Kate Lee is the Lerner Center Program Coordinator (mlee77@syr.edu). Ashley Van Slyke was a Lerner Center intern in summer 2019. She is a nursing student at the University of Pittsburgh with a minor in public service (ajvansly@maxwell.syr.edu). Alexandra Punch is the Lerner Center Associate Director (aepunch@syr.edu).

The mission of the Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion at Syracuse University is to improve population health through applied research and evaluation, education, engaged service, and advocating for evidence-based policy and practice change.

426 Eggers Hall | Syracuse | New York | 13244
syracuse.edu | lernercenter.syr.edu