Employer commitment to wellness with an offering of funded wellness options for personnel is key to creating a culture of health and resilience. Research done at Harvard’s School of Public Health found that for every dollar invested in wellness for employees, medical costs for employees fell by $3.27 and absenteeism costs by $2.73.

A leader in this initiative of making self-care central to all care is Harvard-trained psychiatrist Dr. James Gordon, who founded the Center for Mind-Body Medicine (CMBM). He has created a groundbreaking, evidenced based new medicine centered on self-care and group support for physicians, medical students and other health care providers. Since 1994 this non-profit organization has had worldwide influence by training over 10,000 people and over 150 faculty. Their program is offered in 17 medical schools, many hospitals and community health clinics, and is featured in a recent 60 minutes segment on CMBM faculty aiding traumatized children in Israel and Gaza.

The CMBM program utilizes large group presentations and small group skill acquisition sessions to demonstrate effective techniques for relaxation, meditation, imagery, biofeedback, mindful nutrition, movement, writing and drawing.

Our committee member Dr. Eva Weinlander, Clinical Associate Professor of Family Medicine, is a certified CMBM instructor. She recently participated on a CMBM team hired by a large midwestern hospital/clinic system to bring these practical, evidence based skills to 200 health care providers and support staff, including the CEO. After these trainings, feedback data shows improved communication and a deeper sense of connection. There has been a surge of interest in walking groups, cooking clubs, meditation and yoga classes.

Stanford programs BeWell and HealthySteps mirror this self-care philosophy, and our committee is pro-active in facilitating a wide variety of wellness offerings.

Recent Research:

Description of the format and research outcomes of mind-body skills training at 15 medical schools.

Description of the Stanford Department of Surgery resident support program.