



AN INVITATION

We invite the Global Wellness Institute members, delegates of the Global Wellness Summit, Wellness Immersion designers, and industry specialists to join us in this conversation as we work to adopt a consistent standard for the Wellness Immersion experience. We hope you will share your thoughts. We will continue to compile your responses, add them to an updated document, and use them to further refine our definition of this term, with the shared goal of offering a reliable and consistent experience to our service providers, participants, marketers, and the media. The aim is that we may foster a shared and accurate understanding of this valuable service and the experience it describes.

THE IMMERSION INITIATIVE: OBJECTIVES

- Propose an industry-standard definition for a Wellness Immersion and bring it mainstream.
- Clarify the best-practices and program elements that yield positive outcomes and lasting benefits.
- Highlight three categories of Wellness Immersions.
- Share stories to motivate and inspire positive transformation.
- Collect evidence to support funding by health insurers, policy makers, and employers.

WELLNESS IMMERSION DEFINED

A Wellness Immersion is an experience designed to create space to reconnect to one's sense of mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual wholeness. The experience involves separation from routine life with the intention to invite a positive transformation. It inspires a commitment to conscious growth and provides us with the tools and motivation needed to fully integrate this transformational experience into our lives and sustain its benefits into our everyday being.

KEY ELEMENTS OF A WELLNESS IMMERSION

Intention: Where does the property and the guest find alignment in shared goals?

- Space and time to reconnect
- An active and intentional exploration of the multidimensional aspects of wellness
- Participant's desired outcomes

Setting: How does the setting create a safe space that enables the change process?

- Nurturing the space to nurture the spirit within // Access to nature // Bringing the outdoors, indoors
- Supportive and visually pleasing architectural design and surrounding
- Energetic, esoteric, historically and culturally informed, purposeful design
- Sustainable design and management practices

Program: What does a Wellness Immersion look like, from intake to departure?

- Wellness Immersion as a continuum
- Evidence-based research
- Personal guidance // Post immersion follow up
- Brand and audience alignment // Venue guidelines and policies

Connection: How does connection and a sense of community support the Wellness Immersion?

- Participants deepen their connection to Self and self-care
- Participants (or groups of participants) engage with staff members
- Participants build community among each other and may engage with the local community

Outcome: What are the benefits of a wellness immersion?

- Cultivating presence and awareness // Expansion of one's sense of self
- Improvement in knowledge of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health practices
- Improvement in health, objectively measured through biomarkers
- Sustainable behavior change

CATEGORIES OF WELLNESS IMMERSIONS

Medically Supervised Therapeutic Immersion

Purpose: To treat target health issues under the guidance of medical staff, become more resilient, give up unhealthy habits, implement healthy habits in a sustainable way, focus on specific results.

Key features:

- Medical staff within in-house team
- Pre-visit evaluation and/or thorough evaluation at the beginning and end of stay
- Physical/medical exams and medical supervision (such as monitoring blood pressure and blood sugar) are provided on site by in-house medical team
- Based on results of initial exam/evaluation, personal recommendations are provided for treatments, services, nutrition, etc.
- High level of individualized treatments, programs, and services
- Wide range of complementing programs and services are provided, including outdoor activities, yoga, meditation, educational lectures
- Nutrition plans and/or a specific, healthy diet are an important part of the program
- Typical length of stay: seven to ten days plus
- Individual arrival and departure dates

Integrated Health and Wellness Immersion

Purpose: To improve wellbeing on all levels (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual), de-stress, reconnect with life purpose, become whole again.

Key features:

- Medically trained staff, such as nurses, physical therapists, or wellness counselors on team
- Thorough wellness/integrative health evaluation is usually provided at the beginning of a stay
- Prior to arrival, there might be a conversation with a wellness concierge
- Based on results of evaluation, recommendation for programs and services are provided
- Wide range of programs and services address a variety of conditions and wellness dimensions, such as stress relief, sleep, rejuvenation, detox, fitness, deep relaxation, mindfulness, mental and emotional wellness, spiritual wellness, and personal growth
- Healthy meals are standard and comprehensive and individualized nutritional plans are very often part of the program
- Sometimes additional experts are available during certain times of the year (visiting practitioner program)
- Typical length of stay: five to ten days plus

Dedicated Retreat Immersion

Purpose: Restore, relax, revitalize, engage in a specific wellness practice, and/or learn something new.

Key features:

- Program focuses on a specific health or wellness topic
- Retreats can be offered by health and wellness resorts/destination spas, holistic learning centers or by individual health and wellness professionals who take their group to a venue of their choice (venues range from simple cabin-style accommodations to upscale resorts)
- When hosted by health and wellness resorts or destination spas, retreats are either facilitated by guest teachers or by in-house experts
- Holistic learning centers usually bring in guest teachers for facilitation of these retreats but sometimes members of their permanent staff lead retreats
- Medically trained or special wellness teams are not always on site (depends on property)
- Evaluations at beginning and end of stay are not always part of the retreat (sometimes available as an optional add-on)
- Retreat cuisine is healthy but does not necessarily provide individualized nutrition plans or special diets (such as detox, heart healthy, and meat free)