

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Improving Healthcare for Gulf War Veterans

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## DISCLAIMER AND FUNDING

The views presented do not necessarily represent the views of US Government

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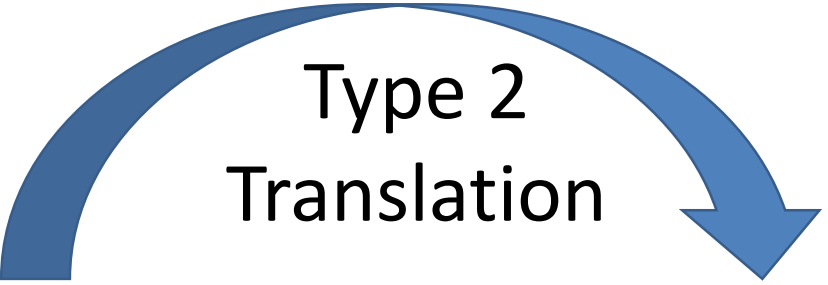
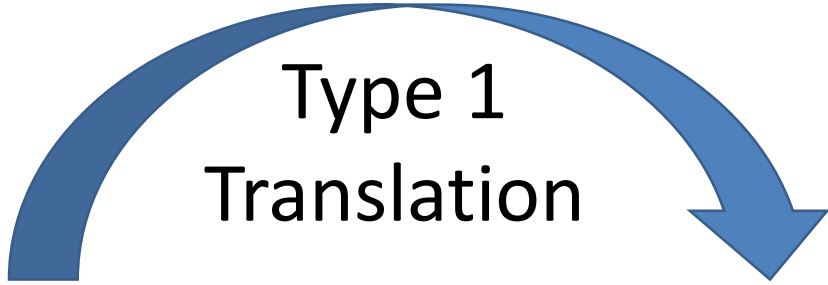
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# Quality Chasm for Gulf War Veterans



# Gulf War Veterans are Dissatisfied with their Care



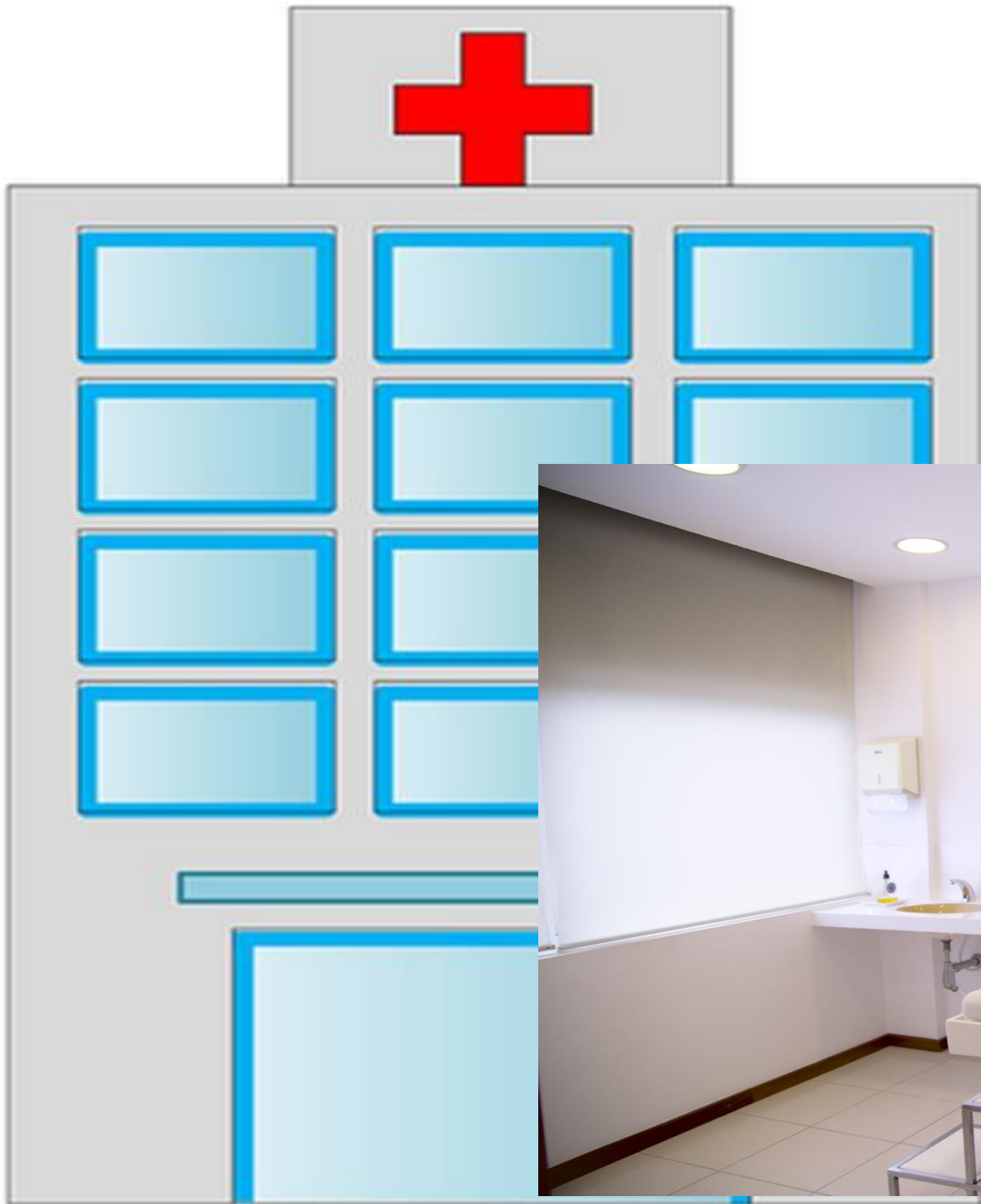


Basic Science

Intervention

Implementation







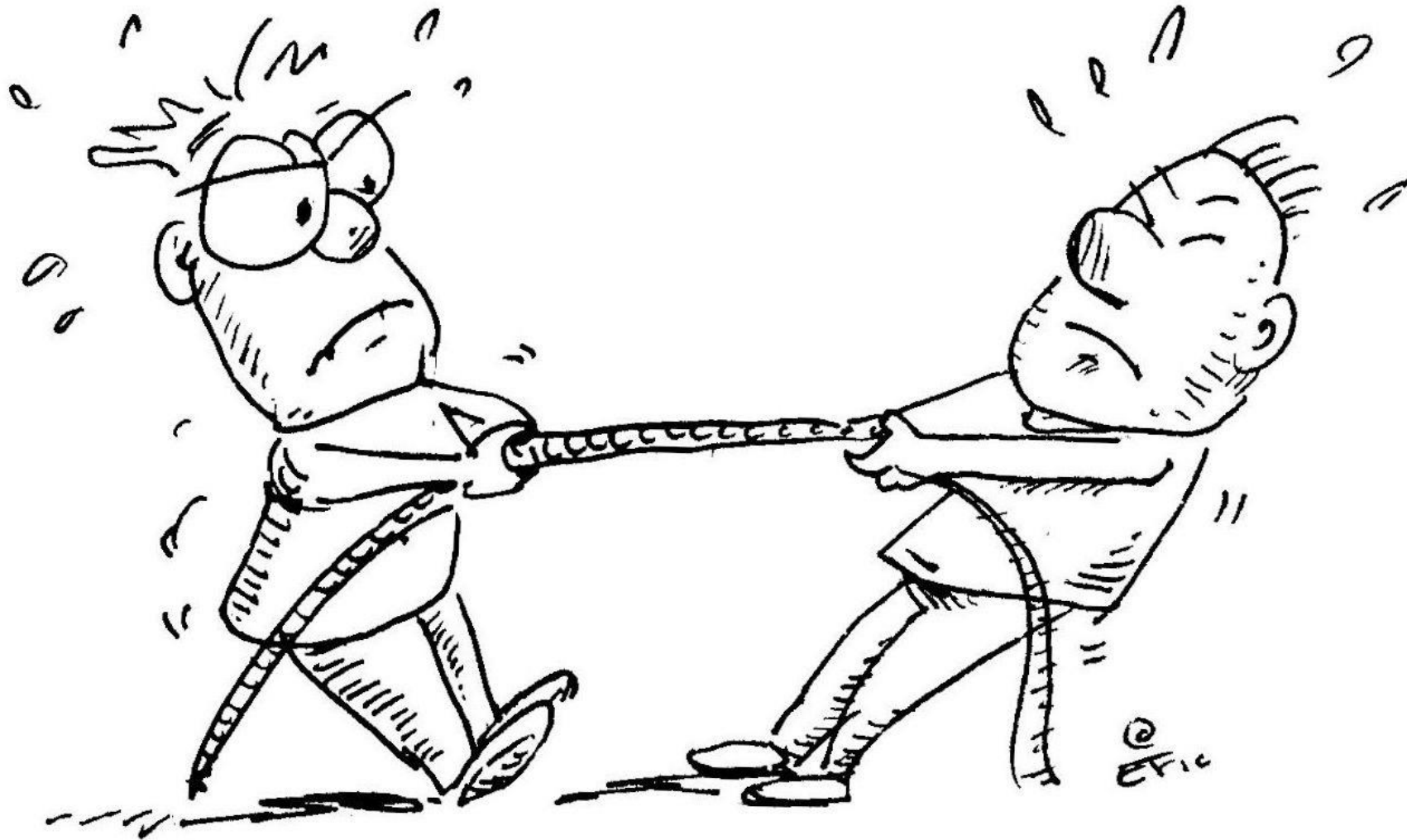
# It's not all in my head

*“I started getting these headaches and tender rashes on my legs like, I didn't think anything of it, I worked at a gym... I had the headaches when I was over in Iraq but they got worse... when I got out I went to the VA in [city] and had a bad experience with a nurse. She told me everything was in my head so I never went back.”*

(Hyde, et al., 2018)



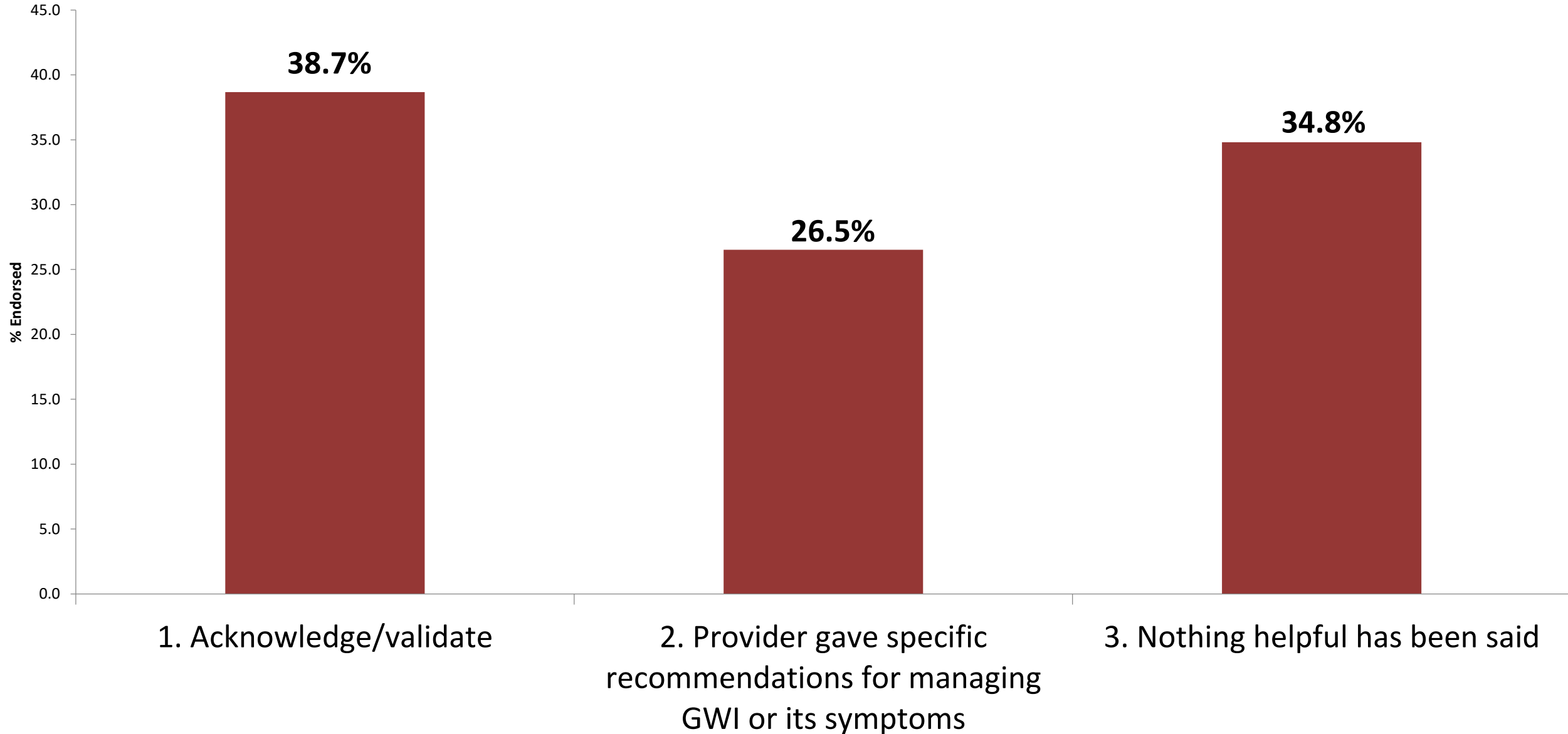
“When I use the term Gulf War Illness with providers I get a blank stare – so I don’t use it”



# Shared Understanding

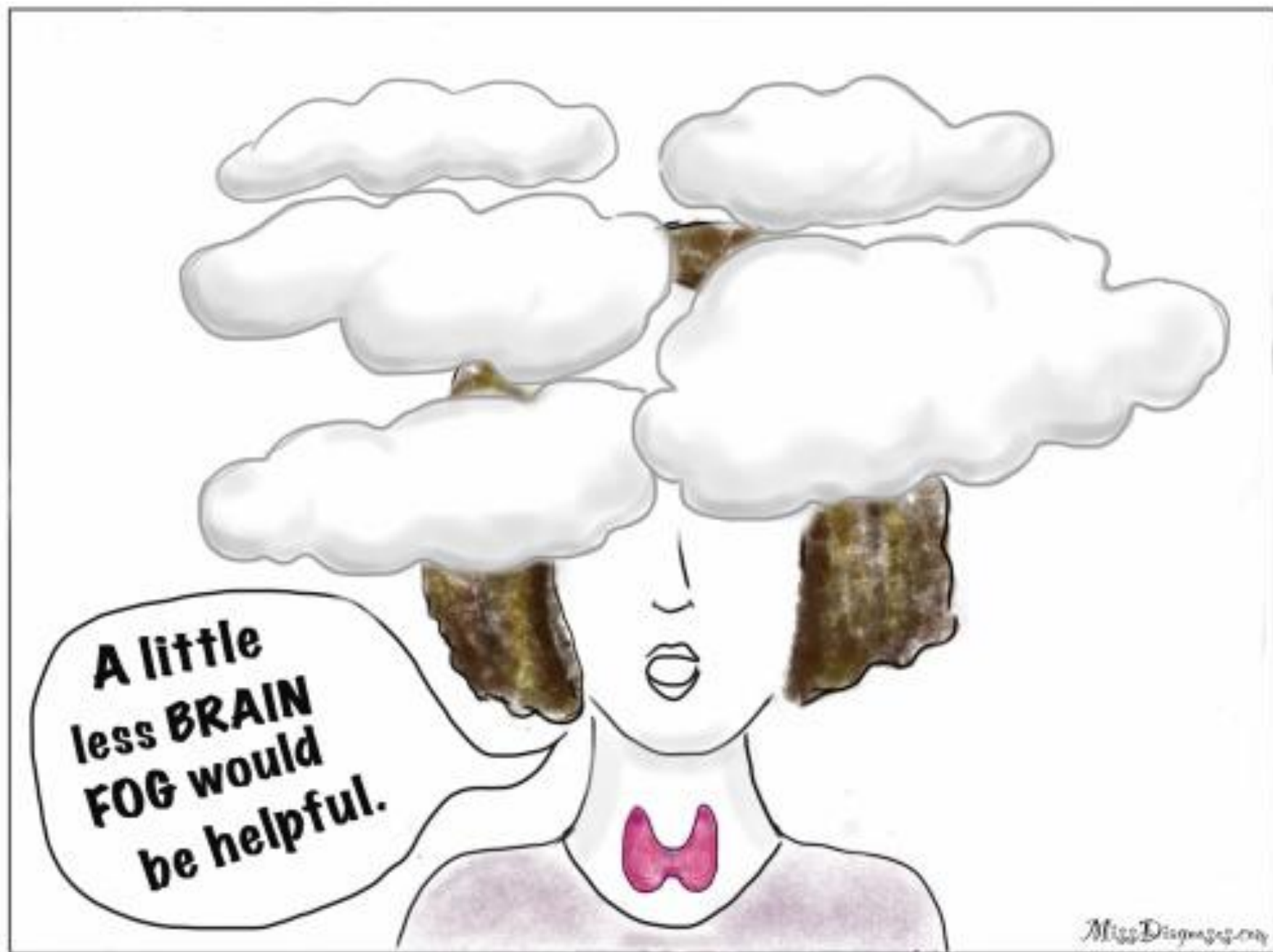


# What is the most helpful thing a healthcare provider has said regarding your GWI?

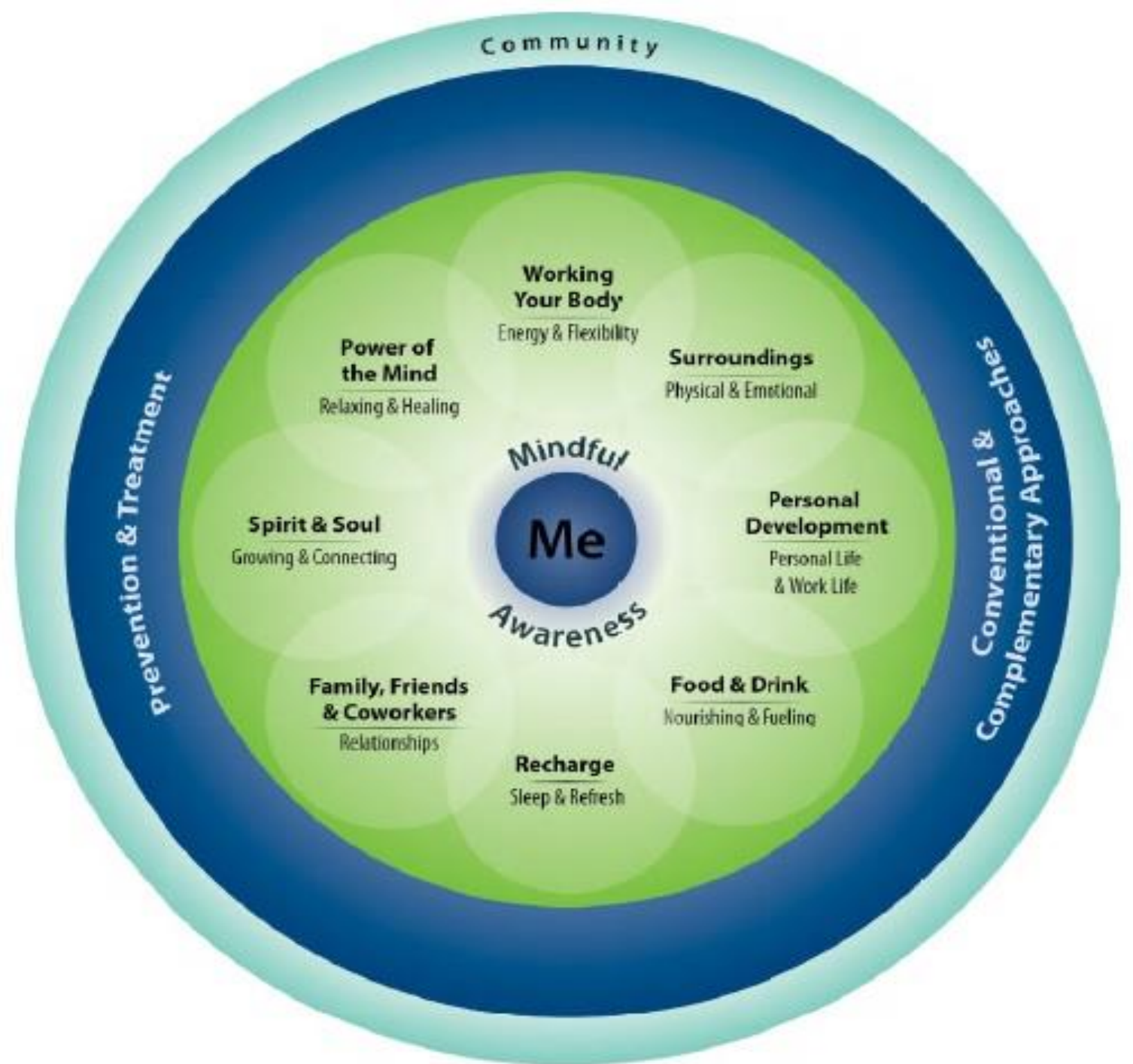




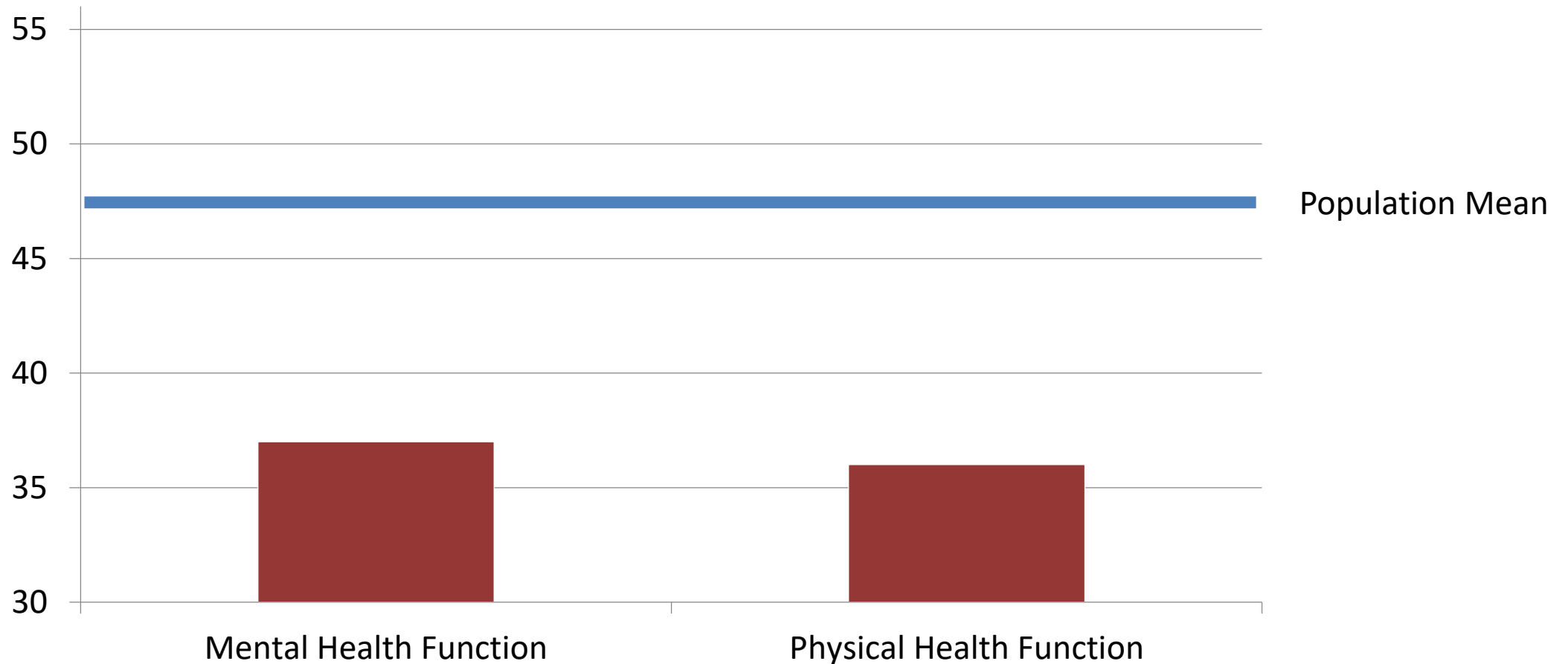
- **Validate**
  - Provider listens, seeks to understand and validates the patient's experience.
- **Explanation**
  - Provide explanation of concerns in terms of adaptive or other processes
- **Action**
  - Proposes and negotiates health management strategies



# Health Education

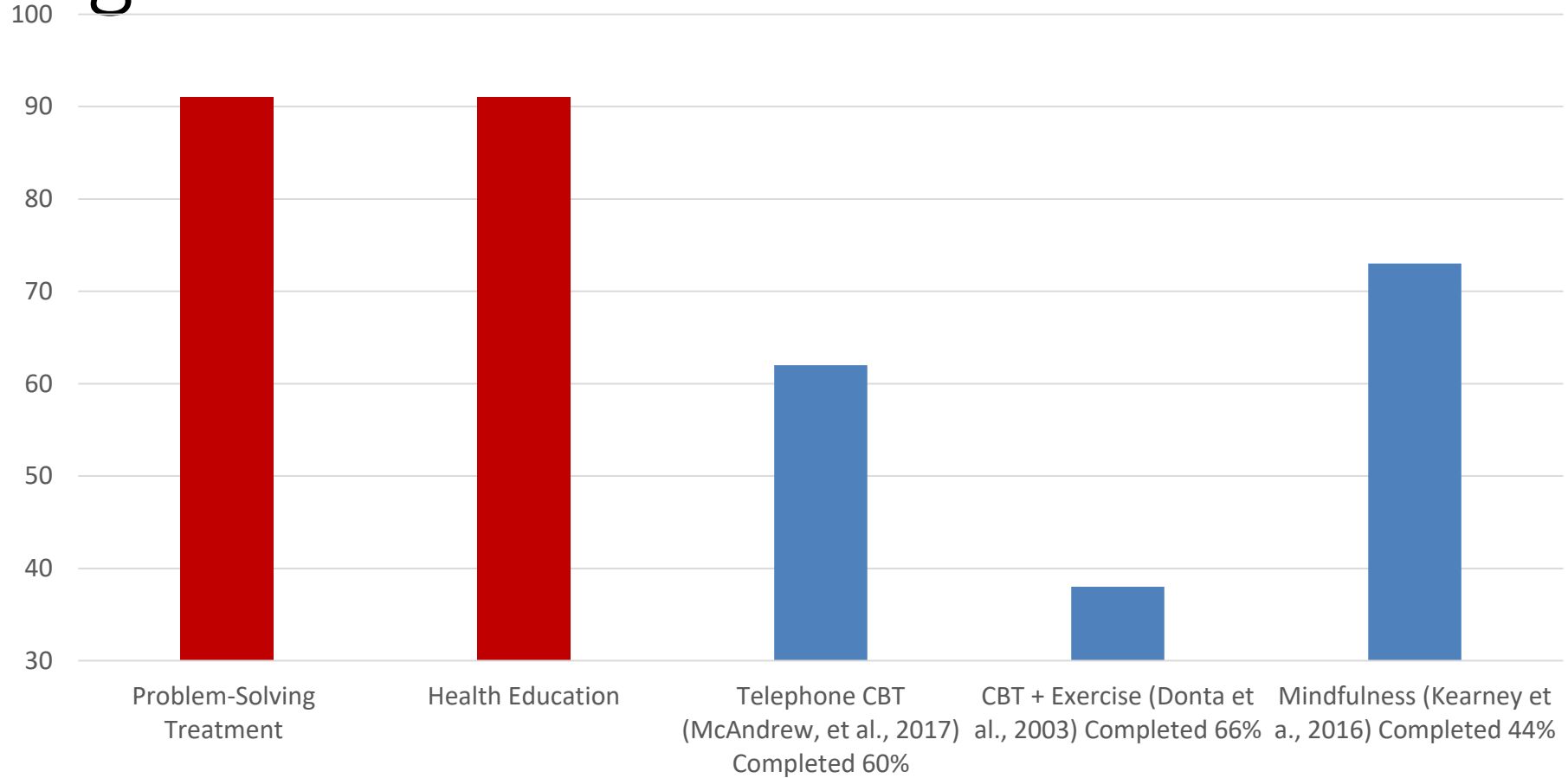


# GWI causes Disability



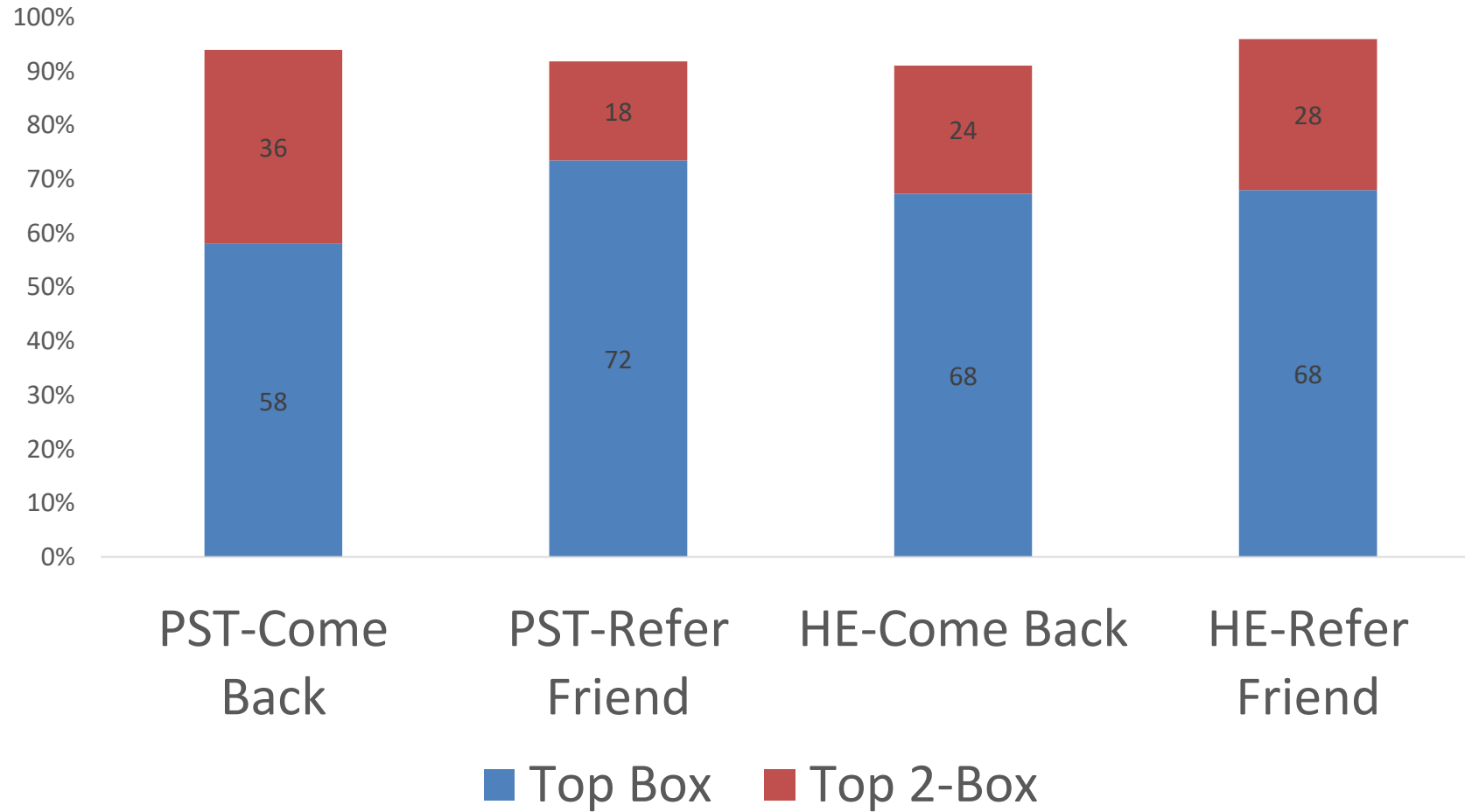
(McAndrew, et al., 2012)

# GWVs with GWI are Adherent to Problem-Solving Treatment & Health Education





# Satisfaction





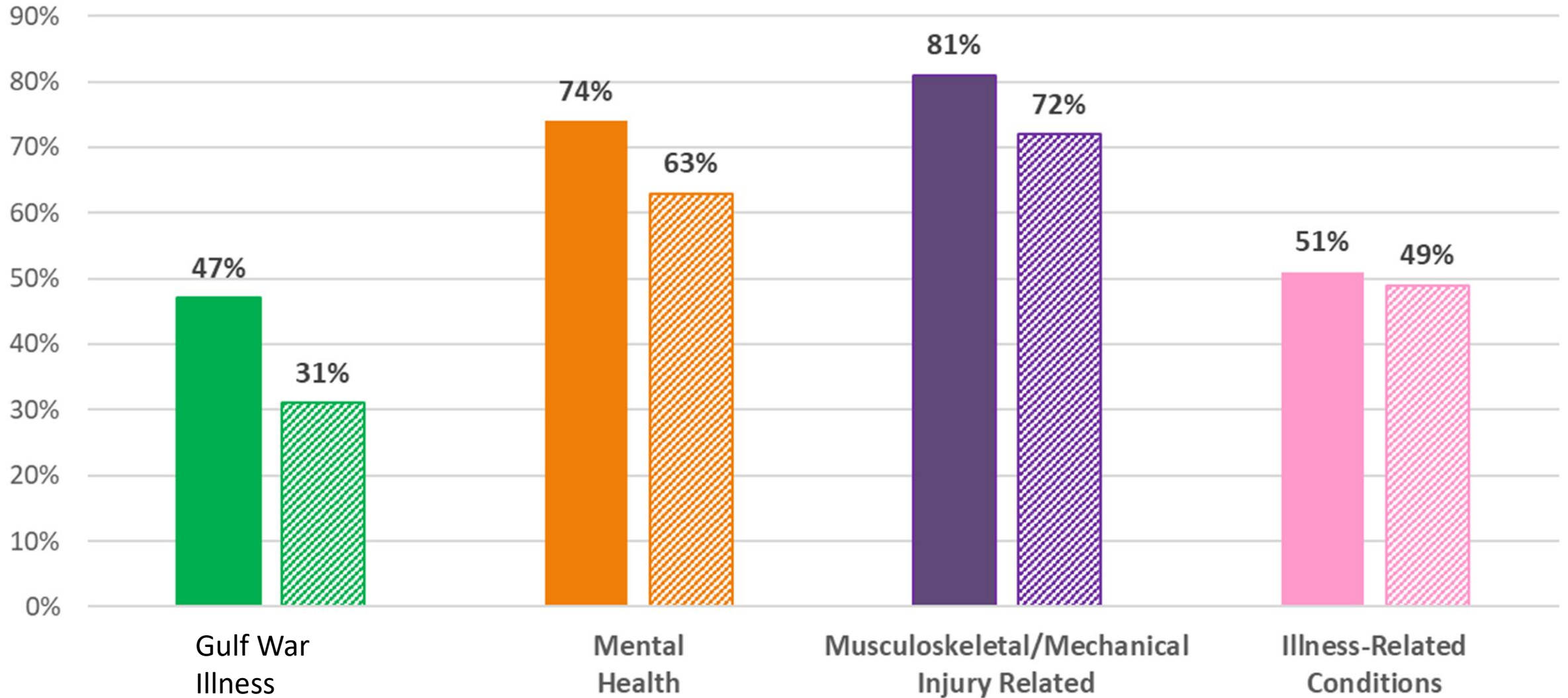


*One of the things that use to happen when we first created military hospitals in this country is that they were staffed with the very best doctors that were almost all tropical medicine specialists. The first question that they would ask you when you were in one of these hospitals is where in the world have you been? ... Someone should be asking me questions. – were you in Desert Storm? Nobody asks us or cares about specific health issues that we have per era as a Veteran... the people that I see at the VA should be experts at this.*

# *Illness Is Baffling*

*“My Primary care provider sent me to get all these tests done; the stress test, the pulmonary test, upper and lower GI, and then you know... All the tests came back okay. ..And that confused the hell out of her, all the doctors, and everybody.”*

## Concordance Between Service Connection and Problem List



 *service connected condition,*  *diagnosis*

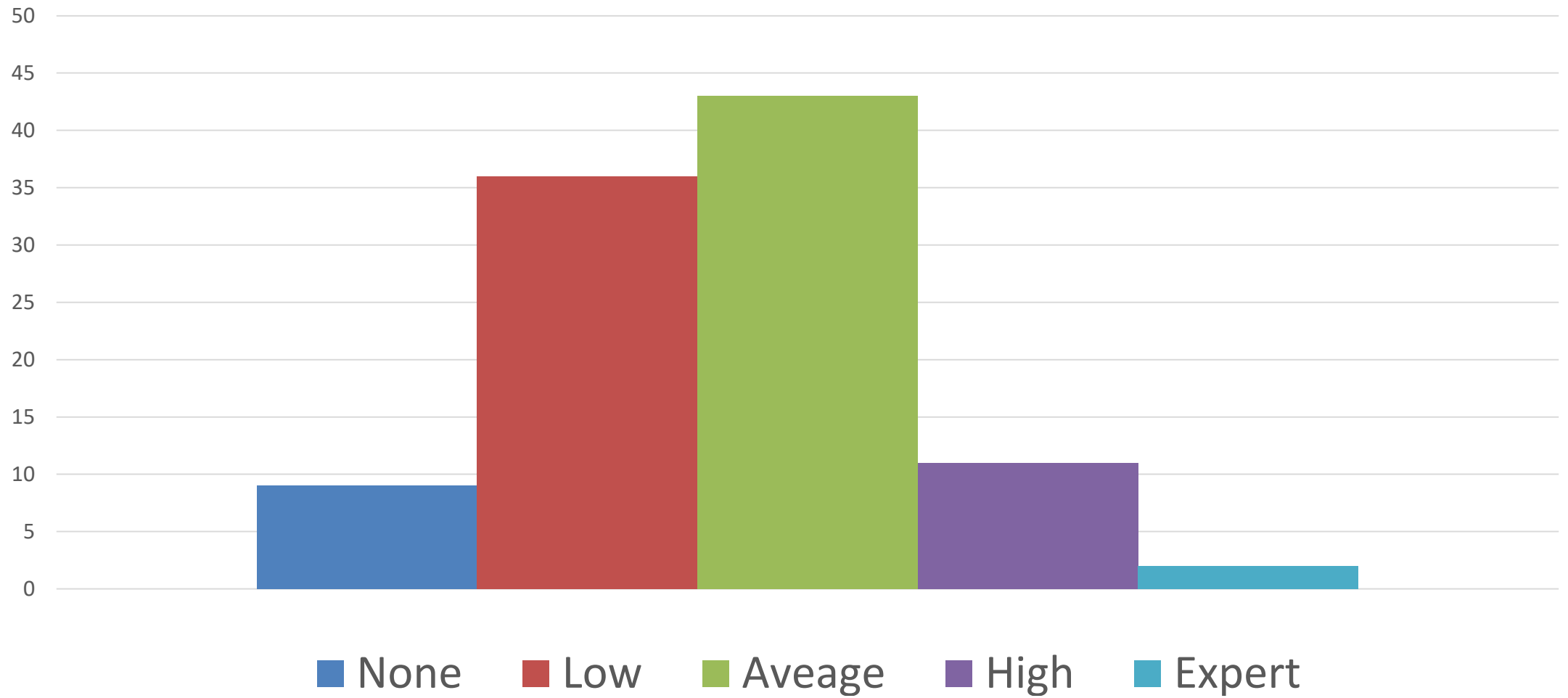


# Physicians Lack Knowledge of Gulf War Illness





# Knowledge of Gulf War Illness





# War Related Illness and Injury Study Center

▼ War Related Illness and Injury  
Study Center

WRIISC Home

▶ About Us

▶ Clinical Services

▶ Referrals

Airborne Hazards & Burn Pits  
Center of Excellence

▶ Research

▼ Education

Overview

Deployment Exposures

Health Conditions

## Provider Training

Health care providers both in and outside of VA can access WRIISC e-learning modules through the [TRAIN Learning Network](#), a national learning management platform. VA health care providers can access e-learning modules using the [Talent Management System \(TMS\)](#), the learning platform recommended for VA employees. All e-learning modules are available for accreditation.

The following e-learning modules are available:

- **Module 1: Assessing Deployment Related Environmental Exposures**
  - On TRAIN: [ID: 1070234](#)
  - On TMS: [ID: 33195](#)
- **Module 2: Airborne Hazards**
  - On TRAIN: [ID: 1070422](#)
  - On TMS: [ID: 33405](#)
- **Module 3: Gulf War Illness**
  - On TRAIN: [ID: 1074205](#)
  - On TMS: [ID: 34572](#)







# Who is Seeing the Whole Picture?

“The primary care physician does not assume responsibility for your care because they just write consults. So when they write a consult to rheumatology or to the pulmonary clinic, or whatever, then they’re, they’re pushing the responsibility to these specialists.”



Providers Lack Knowledge

Time

Resources

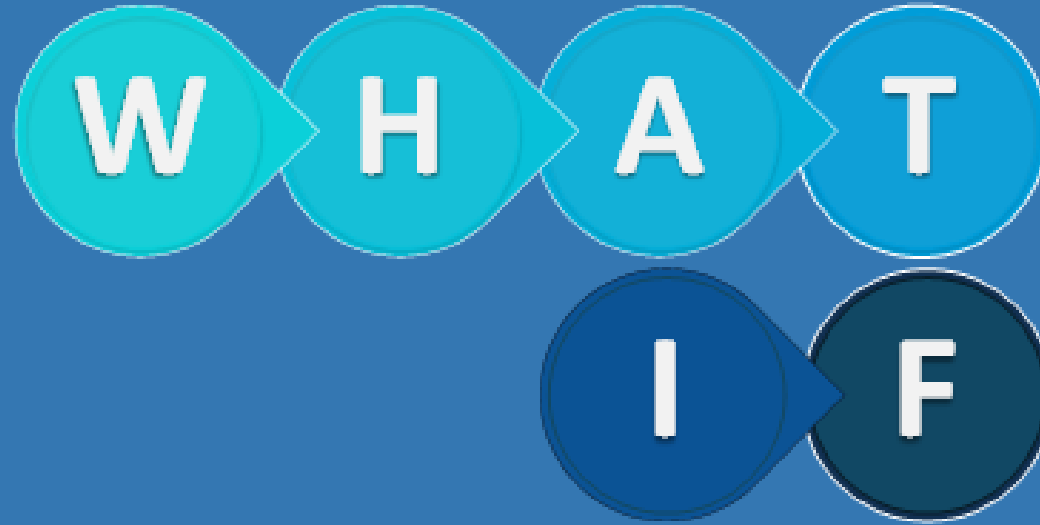
Concern about  
Guidelines



# Collaborative Specialty Care vs. E-Consultation







**A Whole Health Approach To  
Increase Functioning**

Health Coaching for Veterans  
with Gulf War Illness

