

# ASSESSING YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT WHOLE HEALTH

*The ultimate value of life depends upon awareness and contemplation rather than upon mere survival.*

*-Aristotle*

You do not apply your medical knowledge and skills in a vacuum. Decisions related to patient care are informed by values and beliefs – both yours and your patients’. One way to be prepared for those inevitable moments when your beliefs are in conflict with others’ is to be as familiar as possible with what you believe (refer to “[How Do You Know That? Epistemology and Health](#)”). This assessment is designed to help you become more familiar with your beliefs related to different Whole Health-related topics.

Below are 111 questions in 7 different categories. Take the next 20-30 minutes to review and answer them. The more time you spend thinking about your answers, the more rewarding this exercise is likely to be. Consider each statement, and then circle your response on the scale that follows it. If it seems unlikely that you would ever have to answer a given question based on the type of work you do, you can skip it. If you do feel unsure about your stance on something, or you simply do not know your answer, you can just circle “Neutral.”

There are no right or wrong answers; this is primarily a mindful awareness exercise. There is also no expectation that you share your answers with others, unless you wish to do so. The main intent is to provide food for thought and to help you feel more prepared, should real-life circumstances put you in a situation where it is necessary to have clarity about what you believe.

Pay close attention to the feelings the different questions evoke – these may be just as instructive as the answers themselves.

## **SECTION I. BELIEFS AND PERSPECTIVES THAT SHAPE YOUR OVERALL PRACTICE**

1. I believe there is a place for religion and/or spirituality in my work.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

2. My own spiritual and religious views inform how I practice.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

3. My patients' spiritual and religious views shape how I practice.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

4. I believe in a higher power that influences patient outcomes.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

5. I believe that consciousness persists after death.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

6. The majority of the time, I assume patients will follow my recommendations.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

7. I expect people's health to improve because of my care.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

8. I believe the work I do is meaningful.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

9. The work I do energizes me.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

10. I display compassion and empathy in my work.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

## **SECTION II. BELIEFS AND PERSPECTIVES THAT GUIDE YOUR MEDICAL DECISION-MAKING**

11. Whenever possible, I rely on evidence-based medicine to guide my practice.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

12. Past experience guides my patient care.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

13. It is essential to have a conclusive diagnosis prior to beginning treatment.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

14. Intuition informs my work.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

15. Individualizing care from one patient to the next is important.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

16. Patients are usually correct when they say what is wrong with them.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

17. I believe that the mind and body are closely connected.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

### **SECTION III. BELIEFS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS WITH PATIENTS**

18. Continuity is an important aspect of patient care.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

19. It is okay to think of patients as friends.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

20. It is inappropriate for patients to look for medical information online.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

21. I have stereotypes about patients based on race or ethnicity.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

22. I have stereotypes about patients based on sexual orientation.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

23. I have preconceived notions about patients based on their age.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

24. I have preconceived notions about patients based on economic status.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

25. I have preconceived notions about patients based on level of education.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

26. I make assumptions about Veterans based on which war they served in.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

27. I have stereotypes about Veterans based on which branch of the military they served in.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

28. I have biases against my patients if they express different political views from my own.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

29. I am open to collaborating with traditional healers if a patient requests that I do so.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

30. I am comfortable asking patients about their spirituality.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

31. I believe that all illnesses can ultimately be explained through biochemistry.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

32. I am comfortable asking a problematic patient to stop seeking care from me.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

33. It is important to know a patient's life story.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

34. I am comfortable asking someone who is not getting better in my care to seek a second opinion.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

35. I am comfortable attending large social gatherings when one of my patients are present.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

36. I would feel comfortable inviting one of my patients to a large social gathering.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

37. It is okay to give patients your mobile phone number.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

38. I am willing to disclose my own nutrition practices with my patients.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

39. I am willing to discuss my own weight struggles or weight management practices with patients.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

40. I am willing to discuss my own exercise/physical activity practices with patients.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

41. I am willing to offer informal health advice for a patient's family member if they request it.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

42. It is okay to refuse to see a patient if they won't quit smoking.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

43. It is appropriate to attend a patient's funeral.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

44. I would be willing to pray with a patient if they asked me to do so.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

45. I am comfortable shedding tears in front of a patient.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

46. If you make an error, you should always disclose that error to the patient it affected.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

#### **SECTION IV. BELIEFS AND PERSPECTIVES THAT INFLUENCE COLLEAGUE INTERACTIONS**

47. I would report a colleague with a substance abuse problem that compromises patient care.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

48. I would report a colleague with a substance abuse problem that did not seem likely to compromise patient care.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

49. I would always report a colleague who sexually harasses a coworker.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

50. I prefer to practice as part of a team.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

51. Quality metrics improve care.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

52. Electronic medical records improve care.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*



53. It is important for medical colleagues to have social gatherings.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

**SECTION V. BELIEFS AND PERSPECTIVES RELATED TO MAKING A DIAGNOSIS**

54. Fibromyalgia is a real (legitimate) diagnosis.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

55. I am willing to support someone with fibromyalgia in their efforts to apply for disability benefits.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

56. Chronic fatigue syndrome is a “real” disease.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

57. I am comfortable with the idea of supporting someone with chronic fatigue in their efforts to apply for disability benefits.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

58. Multiple chemical sensitivity is a legitimate diagnosis.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

59. Gulf War illness is a legitimate diagnosis.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

60. Adrenal fatigue is a legitimate diagnosis.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

61. Disseminated Candida infection is a legitimate diagnosis.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

62. Chronic Lyme disease is a legitimate diagnosis.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

63. It is reasonable to order a lab if a patient requests it, even if I do not believe it will help with making a diagnosis.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

64. It is appropriate to enter “empacho” or another culturally-based diagnosis on someone’s problem list.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

## **SECTION VI. VIEWS ON CONVENTIONAL THERAPIES**

65. I believe medications and surgery are superior to other therapies.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

66. It is best to minimize the use of medications whenever possible.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

67. Emphasize prevention with patients whenever possible.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

68. It is okay to prescribe a placebo without telling a patient.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

69. I would prescribe a placebo and tell the patient I am doing so.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

70. It is important for clinicians to do home visits.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

71. I enjoy/would enjoy leading group visits.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

72. Health coaches should be a core part of a patient care team.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

73. It is usually wrong to prescribe opioids for non-cancer, chronic pain.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

74. A patient should not refuse a vaccination on philosophical grounds.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

## SECTION VII. VIEWS ON COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

**Note:** This section is divided based on the five domains of complementary therapies used by the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH). If you would like more information about any of the therapies mentioned or about complementary approaches in general, refer to the [“Implementing Whole Health in Your Practice, Part III: Complementary and Integrative Health.”](#)

### BIOLOGICALLY-BASED PRACTICES

75. I would support prescribing bio-identical hormone therapy if a patient asked for it.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

76. It is appropriate to prescribe/recommend vitamins and minerals.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

77. It is appropriate to prescribe dietary supplements other than vitamins and minerals.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

78. Herbal (botanical) remedies are safer than medications.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

79. It is best to prescribe dietary supplements over medications whenever possible.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

80. I am comfortable supporting the use of dietary supplements even if that use is not conclusively supported by evidence-based medicine.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

**MIND-BODY MEDICINE**

81. It is appropriate to recommend hypnotherapy.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

82. It is appropriate to recommend biofeedback.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

83. Therapeutic journaling is worth recommending to some patients.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

84. It is appropriate to recommend cognitive behavioral therapy to a patient.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutra*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

85. It is appropriate to recommend meditation to a patient.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

86. I am comfortable practicing mind-body approaches myself.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

87. Mindful awareness is an important aspect of healing.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

88. I am comfortable teaching my patients one or more mind-body practices.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

**MANIPULATIVE AND BODY-BASED PRACTICES**

89. Chiropractors can be helpful members of a patient's care team.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

90. I would be comfortable receiving care myself from a chiropractor.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

91. I am comfortable referring patients for osteopathic manual medicine.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

92. I am open to receiving osteopathic manual medicine myself.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

93. I would be willing to practice some form of manipulative therapy (osteopathy, chiropractic) myself.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

94. Massage has therapeutic benefit.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

95. I am comfortable receiving massage therapy myself.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

96. I am comfortable referring patients for tai chi or qigong classes.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

97. I am willing to recommend yoga to my patients.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

98. Yoga is/would be beneficial for my self-care.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

## **ENERGY MEDICINE**

99. Subtle energy, or qi, exists.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

100. I am okay with my patients using energy medicine therapies.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

101. I am comfortable with referring someone for energy medicine (Reiki, healing touch, etc.).

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

102. I am comfortable with experiencing energy medicine myself.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

103. I would be willing to offer energy medicine as part of my own practice.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

### **WHOLE MEDICINE SYSTEMS**

104. Acupuncturist should be included as part of a patient's care team. I would refer to an acupuncturist.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

105. I am comfortable with experiencing acupuncture myself.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

106. I would consider training in and practicing acupuncture myself.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

107. Homeopathy is a legitimate therapeutic approach.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

108. I am comfortable with trying homeopathic remedies myself.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*



109. I would be willing to treat patients with homeopathy myself.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

110. Naturopathy is an effective therapy.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

111. I would be willing to see a naturopathic physician myself.

*Strongly Agree*      *Agree*      *Neutral*      *Disagree*      *Strongly Disagree*

## WRAPPING UP

Now that you have completed this questionnaire, take a moment to reflect on the process.

- How did it feel to do this? Did any of the questions elicit strong emotions for you. If so, why?
- Were you surprised by any of your answers?
- The intent is to have you reflect on these questions before you are ‘put on the spot’ in a conversation with a patient or colleague. Is this useful? In the past, have you encountered any of these questions in your practice?
- Which questions stand out for you, now that you have been through them all? Why?
- Are there any topics you wish to learn more about, in order to have a more informed response to a question or questions?

Are there questions or topics that were not covered that you think should be?

## RESOURCE LINKS

- [“How Do You Know That? Epistemology and Health”](https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTHLIBRARY/tools/how-do-you-know-that.asp): <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTHLIBRARY/tools/how-do-you-know-that.asp>
- [Implementing Whole Health In Your Practice, Part III: Complementary and Integrative Health](https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTHLIBRARY/overviews/part-iii-complementary-integrative-health.asp): <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTHLIBRARY/overviews/part-iii-complementary-integrative-health.asp>

## **AUTHOR**

“Assessing Your Beliefs about Whole Health” was written by [J. Adam Rindfleisch](#), MPhil, MD (2018, updated 2023).

*This Whole Health tool was made possible through a collaborative effort between the University of Wisconsin Integrative Health Program, VA Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation, and Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation.*