

# Live Whole Health.

## PERSONAL HEALTH INVENTORY



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration



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## PERSONAL HEALTH INVENTORY

Whole Health is VA's approach to care that supports your health and well-being. Whole Health goes beyond illness, injuries, or disabilities. Your health team will get to know you as a person to develop your health plan based on your values, needs, and goals. Use this Personal Health Inventory to pinpoint specific priorities for your health and all aspects of your life.

**Whole Health centers around what matters to you, not what is the matter with you.**

Developed by the Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation

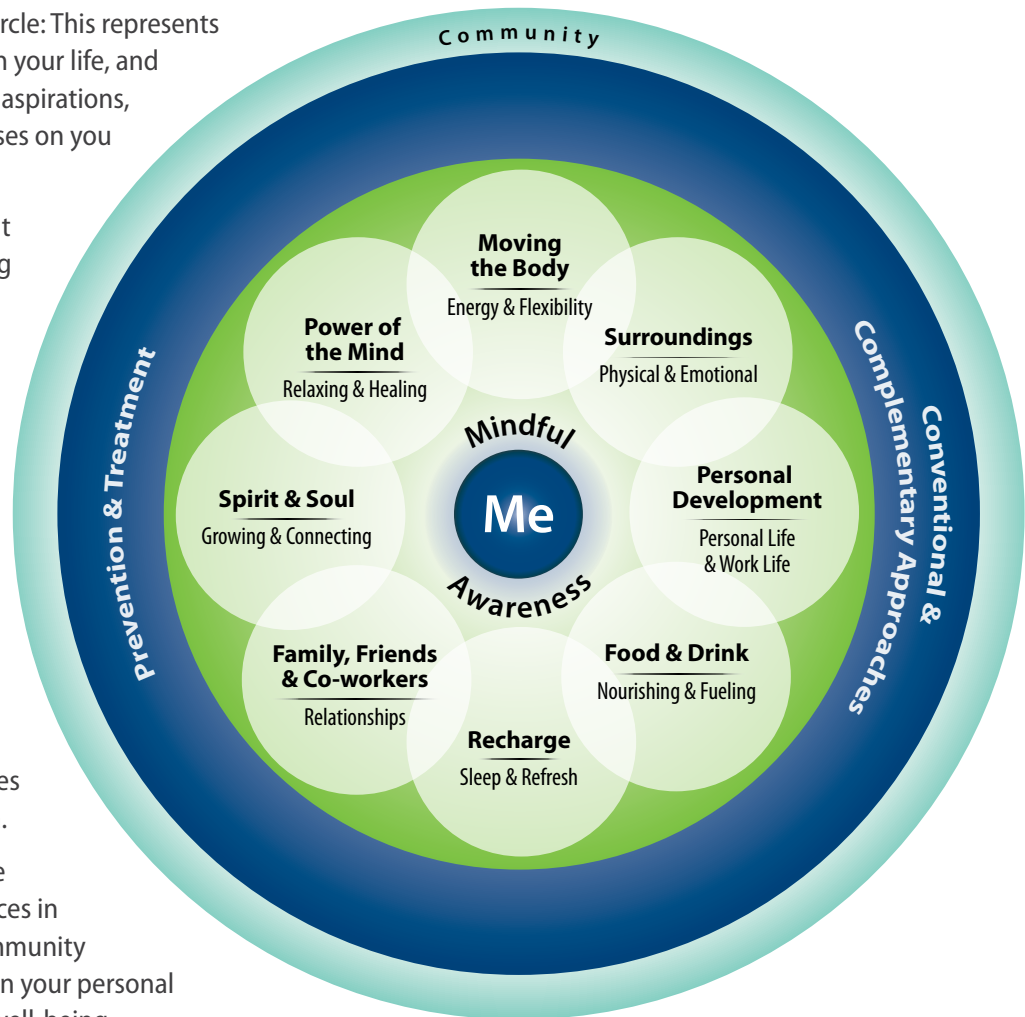
*VHA and the Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation is deeply grateful to Duke Integrative Medicine for allowing us to adapt some of the content in this handout from the "Personalized Health Plan Manual," © 2010 Duke Integrative Medicine/Duke University Medical Center.*

## INTRODUCTION

### THE CIRCLE OF HEALTH

The Circle of Health will help you think about your Whole Health. All of the areas in the circle are important. They are all connected. Improving one area can benefit other areas in your life and influence your overall physical, emotional, spiritual, mental health, and well-being. The human body and mind have tremendous healing abilities and we can strengthen these healing abilities.

- “Me” at the center of the circle: This represents what is important to you in your life, and may include your mission, aspirations, or purpose. Your care focuses on you as a unique person.
- Mindful awareness is about noticing what is happening when it happens.
- Your everyday actions make up the green circle. Your options and choices may be affected by many factors.
- The next ring is professional care (tests, medications, treatments, surgeries, and counseling). This section includes complementary approaches like acupuncture and yoga.
- The outer ring includes the people, places, and resources in your community. Your community has a powerful influence on your personal experience of health and well-being.



Being in a state of mindful awareness helps you see what matters to you. The next circle is your self-care. These are the circumstances and choices you make in your everyday life. The next circle represents professional care you receive. Professional care may include tests, medications, supplements, surgeries, examinations, treatments, and counseling. This also includes complementary approaches such as acupuncture and mind-body therapies. The final circle represents the people and groups with whom you are connected. There is more information about each area of the Circle of Health at the end of this workbook.



## DISCOVER WHY YOU WANT YOUR HEALTH AND DEVELOP YOUR HEALTH GOALS

You are the expert on you! The first and most important step in creating your roadmap to your healthiest life is to step back from your health concerns, and think about your life. What really matters to you? Why do you want or need your health? Sometimes, it can be hard to figure this out. This workbook will help you think about where you are now and where you want to be. Take a few minutes to relax and really think broadly and openly as you answer the questions. You may use additional paper to answer the questions, if you need to.

# YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH INVENTORY

1. What matters most to you in your life right now? What brings you a sense of joy or happiness?  
Write a few words to capture your thoughts:

2. What brings you a sense of joy and happiness?

3. Rate where you feel you are on the scales below from 1–5, with 1 being **not so good**, and 5 being **great**.

**Physical Well-Being:**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Not so good				Great

**Mental/Emotional Well-Being:**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Not so good				Great

**Life: How is it to live your day-to-day life?**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Not so good				Great

## WHERE YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU'D LIKE TO BE

For each area below, consider "Where you are" and "Where you want to be." Circle a number between 1 (low) and 5 (high) that best represents where you are and where you want to be. You do not need to be a "5" in any of the areas now, nor even wish to be a "5" in the future. In the "Where you are" box, briefly write the reasons you chose that number. In the "Where you want to be" box, write down some changes that might make this area better for you. Some areas are strongly connected to other areas, so you may notice some of your answers seem the same. Try to fill out as many areas as you can. You do not have to write in every area. You might want to start with the easier ones and come back to the harder ones. It is OK just to circle the numbers.

**Moving the Body:** Our physical, mental, and emotional health are impacted by the amount and kind of movement we do.

Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high)					Where would you like to be?				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
What are the reasons you choose this number?					What changes could you make to help you get there?				

**Recharge:** Our bodies and minds need rest in order to optimize our health. Recharging also involves activities that replenish your mental and physical energy.

Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high)					Where would you like to be?				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
What are the reasons you choose this number?					What changes could you make to help you get there?				

**Food and Drink:** What we eat and drink can have a huge effect on how we experience life, both physically and mentally.

Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high)

**1                  2                  3                  4                  5**

What are the reasons you choose this number?

Where would you like to be?

**1                  2                  3                  4                  5**

What changes could you make to help you get there?

**Personal Development:** Our health is impacted by how we spend our time. We feel best when we can do things that really matter to us or bring us joy.

Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high)

**1                  2                  3                  4                  5**

What are the reasons you choose this number?

Where would you like to be?

**1                  2                  3                  4                  5**

What changes could you make to help you get there?

**Family, Friends, and Co-Workers:** Our relationships, including those with pets, have as significant an effect on our physical and emotional health as any other factor associated with well-being.

Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high)

**1                  2                  3                  4                  5**

What are the reasons you choose this number?

Where would you like to be?

**1                  2                  3                  4                  5**

What changes could you make to help you get there?

**Spirit and Soul:** Connecting with something greater than ourselves may provide a sense of meaning and purpose, peace, or comfort. Spiritual connection can take many forms.

Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high)					Where would you like to be?				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
What are the reasons you choose this number?					What changes could you make to help you get there?				

**Surroundings:** Surroundings include where we live, work, learn, play, and worship—both indoors and out. Safe, stable, and comfortable surroundings have a positive effect on our health.

Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high)					Where would you like to be?				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
What are the reasons you choose this number?					What changes could you make to help you get there?				

**Power of the Mind:** Our thoughts are powerful and can affect our physical, mental, and emotional health. Changing our mindset can aid in healing and coping.

Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high)					Where would you like to be?				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
What are the reasons you choose this number?					What changes could you make to help you get there?				



## PROFESSIONAL CARE

**Prevention:** On a scale of 1–5, circle the number that best describes how up to date you are on your preventive care such as vaccinations, cholesterol check, cancer screening, and dental care.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	A little bit	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much

**Clinical Care:** If you are working with a health care professional or team, on a scale of 1–5, circle the number that best describes how well you understand your health problems, the treatment plan, and your role in your health.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	A little bit	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much

☐ I am not working with a health care professional or team.

## REFLECTIONS

1. Now that you have thought about what matters to you in all of these areas, what would your life look like if you had the health you want? What kind of activities would you be doing? Or how might you feel different? What area might you focus on?
2. What might get in the way? How might you start?

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### ME

I am the most important person when it comes to making choices that influence my health and well-being. I am the central person on my health care team, and my health care team professionals are some of the other team members. “Me” at the center of the circle represents what is important to you in your life and may include your mission, aspirations, or purpose. Your care focuses on you as a unique person.

### MINDFUL AWARENESS

Mindful awareness is being fully aware, or paying attention. Sometimes, we go through our daily lives on autopilot. We are not fully aware of the present. We often dwell on the past and on planning events in the future. We do not spend much time really paying attention and noticing what is happening right now; without judging or trying to fix it. Your body and mind send you signals constantly. If your attention is elsewhere, you don’t notice. Then, the signals that began as whispers become loud warnings.

### THE EIGHT AREAS OF SELF CARE

Self-care is a very important factor in living a healthy life, which in turn allows you to live your life fully, in the ways that matter to you. Self-care includes all the choices you make on a daily basis that affect your physical, mental, and spiritual health. Often, larger forces may greatly impact our health, including our financial situation, lack of stable or safe housing, etc. For some of us, how society at large perceives and treats us may have real impact on our health and well-being. And, at the same time, self-care choices we make on a daily basis can also affect our physical, mental, and spiritual health. In fact, the evidence shows that how you take care of yourself will have a greater impact on your health and well-being than the medical care you receive. Self-care can also affect your chances for developing diseases as well as the seriousness of that disease. Consider your values, lifestyle, habits, and motivations in each area. Taking stock of where you are now and where you want to be in each of these areas is the first step in living a healthier life. Positive change can happen much faster than you may think!

#### **Moving the Body** *“Energy and Flexibility”*

Our physical, mental, and emotional health are impacted by the amount and kind of movement we do. Activity gives you energy and strength. Movement can make you more flexible. Activity is also good for your mind. Regular activity can help with many issues affecting one’s health, for example it can help lower blood pressure and cholesterol and reduce the risk for heart disease. Examples of activity and movement include walking, gardening, dancing, chair yoga, or lifting weights. It’s important to find what works for you and your body.

#### **Surroundings** *“Physical and Emotional”*

Surroundings include where we live, work, learn, play, and worship—both indoors and out. Safe, stable, and comfortable surroundings have a positive effect on our health. Your environment can affect your health. You may have issues with safety, or things like clutter, noise, bad smells, poor lighting, or water quality. You may be able to change some of these factors, but you may not be able to change them all. It starts with paying attention to the influences of your environment on your life and health. Improve what you can for a safe, comfortable, and healthy space.

#### **Personal Development** *“Personal Life and Work Life”*

Our health is impacted by how we spend our time. We feel best when we can do things that really matter to us or bring us joy. How do you spend your time and energy during the day? Do things give you energy or make you tired? Do you

spend time doing what matters most to you? How do you feel about your finances and how are they affecting your life? These factors affect not only your happiness, but also your health.

### **Food and Drink** “Nourishing and Fueling”

What we eat and drink can have a huge effect on how we experience life, both physically and mentally. Choose healthy eating habits that fit your lifestyle. A healthy diet can help prevent disease and promote healing, especially from chronic conditions such as arthritis, heart disease, diabetes, and depression. Learn which foods and drinks support your health and life goals. Keep your body and mind properly fueled and hydrated.

### **Recharge** “Sleep and Refresh”

Our bodies and minds need rest in order to optimize our health. Recharging also involves activities that replenish your mental and physical energy.

### **Family, Friends, and Co-workers** “Relationships”

Our relationships, including those with pets, have as significant an effect on our physical and emotional health as any other factor associated with well-being. Feeling alone can sometimes make you get sick or keep you sick. Positive social relationships are healthy. Healthy relationships with a life partner, friends, neighbors, or co-workers can be a source of strength. It's good to talk to people who care about you and listen to you.

### **Spirit and Soul** “Growing and Connecting”

Connecting with something greater than ourselves may provide a sense of meaning and purpose, peace, or comfort. Spiritual connection can take many forms. When things are hard, where do you turn for strength and comfort? Some people turn to spiritual or religious faith. Some people find comfort in nature. Some connect with art, music or prefer quiet time alone. Some want to help others. You may express this as a guide to living fully.

### **Power of the Mind** “Relaxing and Healing”

Our thoughts are powerful and can affect our physical, mental, and emotional health. Changing our mindset can aid in healing and coping. Your mind can affect your body. Sometimes when you think about stressful things, your heart rate and blood pressure go up (without you even recognizing it). You can use the power of your mind to lower blood pressure or control pain. Learn to use the connection between your body, brain, and mind. Military Service members and athletes use the power of the mind to visualize a successful mission or event. Mind-body practices tap into the power of the mind to heal and cope and can help us advance what we want most in life.

## **PROFESSIONAL CARE**

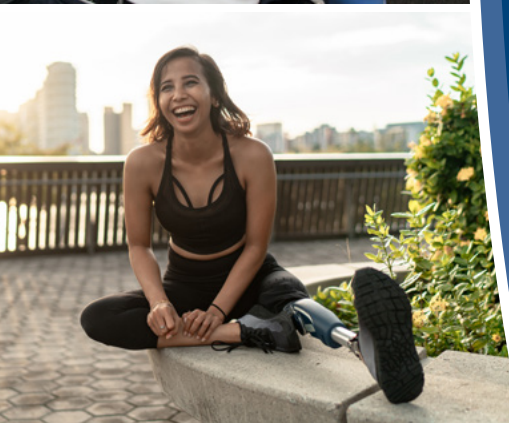
Partner with your health care team to address your health concerns, understand care options, and define actions you may take to promote your health and goals. Prevention and treatment of illness or disease and traditional and complementary medicine are part of professional care. Preventive care includes things like immunizations and cancer screening. Common treatments include check-ups, medicines, supplements, physical therapy, surgery, and counseling. Complementary medicine includes approaches like acupuncture and mind-body therapies. It is important to stay current with your personal care plan for your health and well-being.

## **COMMUNITY**

The final circle represents your community. For some, their community is close and for others it is far away. Your community is more than the places where you live, work, and worship. It includes all the people and groups you connect with—those you rely on and those who rely on you.



 **Veterans  
Crisis Line**  
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1



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Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation  
Veterans Health Administration  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW | Washington DC 20420

[va.gov/wholehealth](https://va.gov/wholehealth)



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