

## Well-Being Signs: A Whole Health Measurement for Well-Being

### What is it?

The Well-Being Signs is a 3-question quantitative scale that was designed to provide a quick and easy way to assess how Veterans are doing in their daily lives. It focuses the things that are most important to them; those things that bring meaning and purpose to their lives. This scale is validated, which means that it has been studied, and has been shown to measure what it's intended to measure.

The Well-Being Signs asks about whether Veterans can:

- (1) participate in the roles and activities that are most important to them,
- (2) function well in those roles and activities, and
- (3) are generally satisfied with how things are going with them.

### How is it different from asking about the Veteran's Mission, Aspiration and Purpose?

The Mission, Aspiration and Purpose question focuses on *what* is most important to a Veteran. The Well-Being Signs focus on whether a Veteran can actually *do* what's most important to them. The Well-Being Signs builds on the Mission, Aspiration and Purpose question with a numerical score that captures a Veteran's overall well-being.

### What is it NOT?

It is not intended to diagnose specific mental and physical health conditions.

### Who should use it?

Anyone can use it. It can be administered by any VA staff who have acquainted themselves with the tool.

### How could using the WBS enhance my clinical practice?

- It is simple to use and can be used both as a decision-making tool for treatment planning and referrals, including to Whole Health program(s).
- It can open the door to conversation about life factors that can significantly impact health care behavior, but that Veterans sometimes find difficult to disclose.
- It may even get Veterans to talk with you about things they may be hesitant to mention during clinical visits and which could impact their care.
- It be used as baseline and outcome measures to monitor a Veteran's progress in psychosocial well-being following engagement in VA health care.

### What do I do with the information?

These three questions can open the door to a fuller discussion of the Veteran's life beyond their medical issues and concerns. It will help you connect how other aspects of their life are related to their health and health care, and whether modifications may be needed to treatment plans.

## Are you ready to use Well-Being Signs?

1. **Introduce the scale** - “I’d like to ask you some questions about how you are doing in your overall life. These questions may seem different than the typical questions you are asked at the VA. It is important for us to ask these questions because they can help us provide better care to you.”
2. **Administer the tool** - The measure is available in its full form in VHA’s electronic health medical record. For more guidance on how to use the measure, please visit the Well-being Signs Page, linked at the bottom of this document.
3. **Now what?** Knowing the Veteran’s sense of well-being can open the door to a conversation or introduce an opportunity to refer the Veteran to Whole Health services. You may take follow-up steps or ask questions, like those outlined below.
4. **What follow-up steps can I take? There are several follow-up actions you can take, depending on whether you think these make sense.** For example, if a Veteran reports a low Well-Being Signs score, you may suggest the need for treatment modifications or additional referrals. These suggestions will depend on what is not going well and your discussion with the Veteran about how psychosocial well-being impacts or could be impacted by treatment. You may choose to:
  - Talk with them about how the treatment plan you made/are making will help them function better in the parts of their life that are most important to them.
  - Recommend any modifications to treatment that are suggested by your discussion. For example, changing treatments or adjusting medication dosages to minimize side effects, negative impacts on functioning/other aspects of life, etc.
  - Refer them to other services and health care team members that may help them with that aspect of their well-being, including:
    - Whole Health Partners, Health & Wellness Coaches, and Well-being Programs
    - Primary Care, Mental Health, and additional Specialty Care services as appropriate
    - Additional Whole Health services, including Complementary & Integrative Health (CIH) approaches
5. **What follow-up questions can I ask?**
  - Is there anything our health care team can do to help you with your sense of well-being?
  - Are there changes we can make to your treatment that you think might help?
  - We have experts who can help you with (insert well-being issue here). Would you like a referral to \_\_\_?



### Where can I learn more?

Contact Us: [VHAOPCC&CTWellbeingSignsWorkgroup@va.gov](mailto:VHAOPCC&CTWellbeingSignsWorkgroup@va.gov)

**Well-Being Signs:** <https://bit.ly/wellbeingsigns> (VA Devices Only)

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