

## What Matters Most Cover Page

Dear Veteran,

We are asking you to complete a worksheet on “What Matters Most”.

**What is this?** This is a tool to help you reflect on What Matters Most, as you think about your healthcare. It is for older adults with more than one illness. Getting treatment for many health care conditions at the same time can be difficult. Sometimes treatment can involve “trade-offs” – meaning one treatment might make one thing better while it makes another thing worse. So, it can be helpful if you can tell your health care team What Matters Most, so they can help you choose the right option.

Figuring out What Matters Most can actually be harder than it sounds. This tool may help.

**When should I do this?** You can do it on your own or with a healthcare professional. It may be helpful to reflect on this tool at your own pace before meeting with a healthcare professional.

This tool is meant for situations where you have multiple illnesses you are trying to manage. There are a few questions at the end that begin to address situations if your health worsens, and you become very sick. This may not apply to you now. If it does, there are more things you may wish to speak to your healthcare team about.

**How should I do this?**

→ Focus on **What Matters Most** to you. You may think “everything on this list is important” - but choose just the **1-3** things that matter most.

→ Answer these questions thinking about how they impact your **health decisions**.

**Example:** Let’s say you are considering the pros and cons of getting a surgery that may improve your walking (a benefit) but might cause some trouble thinking (a risk). When you make the decision about surgery – **What Matters Most** to you - walking or thinking clearly?

→ **Not everything will apply to you.** For example, a question may ask about physical touch with a partner – but what if you are not in a relationship? A question may ask about walking – but what if you use a wheelchair and get around just fine in it? People differ in what is important, and people adapt to not having things they once thought were important. If it doesn’t apply to you now, then you would probably not circle it as something that “matters most”.

→ **What matters most to you may be missing!** If something is important to you but not on the list, write it in!

Name		Date	
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**What Matters Most – Structured Tool**

It is important to make health decisions that line up with your priorities, especially when you have many medical concerns. To do so, it is important to know what matters most to you. For some, this can be hard to put into words. This tool may help.

Circle up to 3 things in each column that **MATTER MOST** to you.

FUNCTIONING	ENJOYING LIFE	CONNECTING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think clearly</li> <li>• Walk or move around by myself</li> <li>• Choose where I live</li> <li>• Eat foods I enjoy</li> <li>• Work or volunteer</li> <li>• Make decisions about my finances</li> <li>• Dress or bathe myself</li> <li>• Be able to see (or hear, smell, taste, touch)</li> <li>• Drive or be able to get around outside my home</li> <li>• Other:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in favorite hobbies (like sports, gardening, woodworking, reading, art, etc.)</li> <li>• Attend social events (like movies, concerts, parties, meetings, etc.)</li> <li>• Participate in religious/spiritual services or practices</li> <li>• Spend time outdoors or connecting to nature</li> <li>• Do things to improve myself, learn, or be creative</li> <li>• Have physical touch and / or sexual intimacy</li> <li>• Have quiet time doing nothing in particular</li> <li>• Travel and/or see new places</li> <li>• Exercise</li> <li>• Other:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spend time with family and friends</li> <li>• Have good relationships with family or friends</li> <li>• Connect to God or a higher power</li> <li>• Avoid being a burden to others</li> <li>• Take care of my pet(s)</li> <li>• Feel connected to positive aspects of myself</li> <li>• Contribute to my community or neighborhood</li> <li>• Take care of family or friends (like being a caregiver)</li> <li>• Other:</li> </ul>

**Of all the things you circled, Which 3 Matter Most above all? (Put an X next to them).  
In your own words, what do they mean to you?**

**MANAGING HEALTH**

In general, what do you hope your healthcare can do for you?

How important are <b>religious / spiritual beliefs</b> to you when making medical decisions?	<b>Circle one</b>			If so how?
	Not at all	Somewhat	Very	
How important is your <b>cultural, racial, or ethnic</b> background when making medical decisions?	Not at all	Somewhat	Very	If so how?
How important is <b>controlling pain</b> to you when making medical decisions?	Not at all	Somewhat	Very	If so how?
How important are <b>financial</b> considerations to you when making medical decisions?	Not at all	Somewhat	Very	If so how?

**The questions below apply to what matters most if your condition worsens.**

As illnesses progress, they can impact a person’s “quality of life”. People have different beliefs about how much they value quality of life versus length of life. This can impact decisions to get medical treatments. Please tell us about you.	The <b>length of my life</b> is more important than the quality of my life	<b>Some of Both or It depends</b>	My <b>quality of life</b> is more important than how long I live
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How much <b>input from family</b> do you want when making medical decisions?	A little	Some	A lot	If so, how?
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<p>If I am very sick and unable to speak for myself, I want _____ to speak for me.</p> <p>(If applicable to you) I prefer that _____ does NOT speak for me.</p>	<p><b>I would like to talk to a social worker about an advance directive:</b></p> <p><b>__Yes __No __Unsure</b></p>
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Thank you for sharing with us **What Matters Most** to you.  
 We will use this to work with you to set goals for your current and future health care.