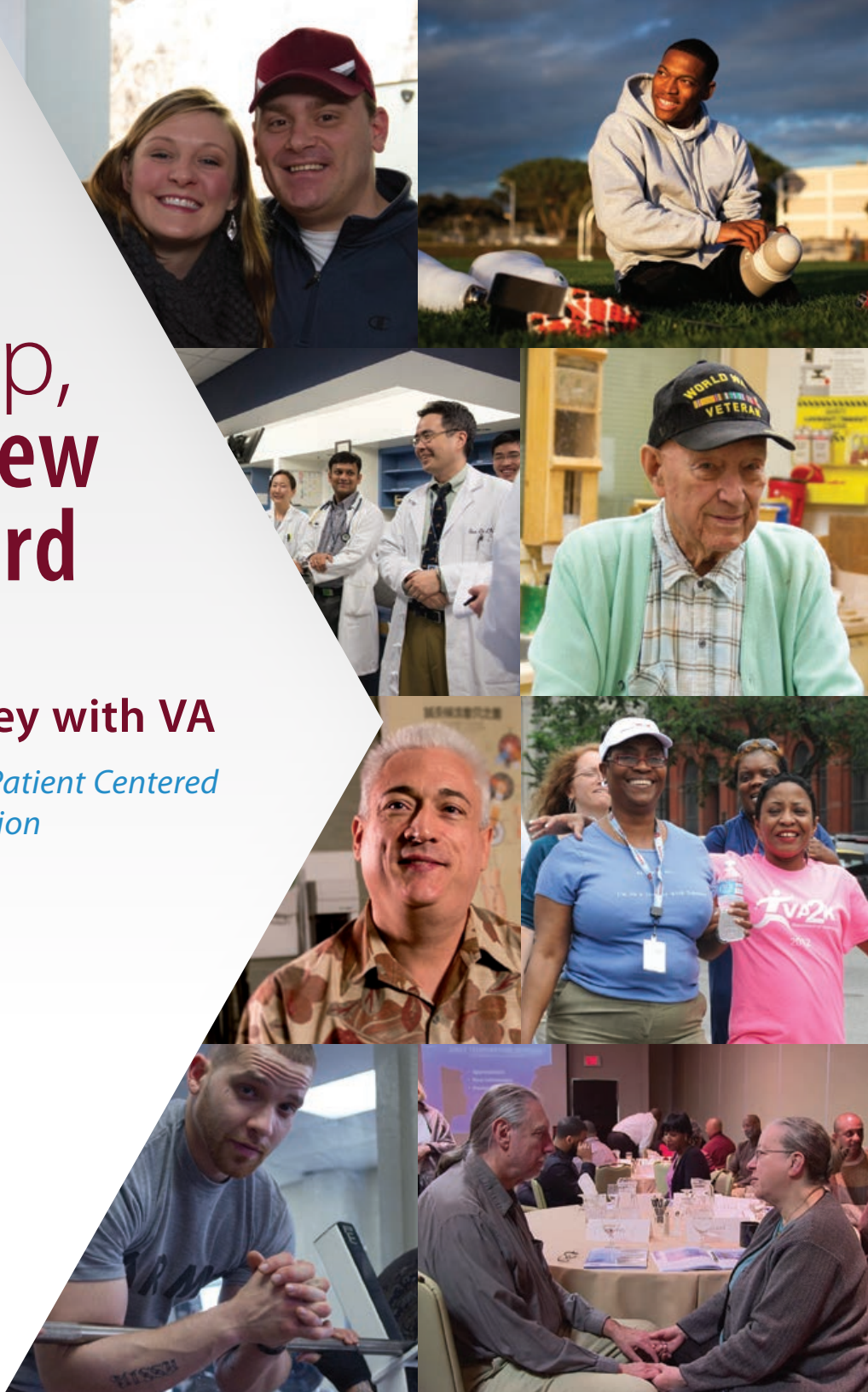
VA HEALTH CARE | Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century

A Partnership, A Plan, A **New Path Forward**

Shape Your Journey with VA

A Report by the VA Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation



Health for Life

www.va.gov/patientcenteredcare

In VA –
We Value Veterans
and What Veterans Value
Health for Life

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"Our goal is to provide Veterans with the care and the opportunities for health that they have earned and paid for dearly through their service and sacrifices."

— VHA Blueprint for Excellence

Executive Director's Welcome:

Find the problem, then fix the problem: For decades, that was the heart of health care in the United States. It's what doctors were trained to do: *How long have you been feeling this way? How did it start? What are your symptoms?* That was, largely, the extent of the conversation; almost everything about a patient's visit revolved around the illness. And, yes, that is important — but when we focus only on the disease and not on *you*, the whole person, we do not partner with you in the best possible way.

So for the past three years, VA has been transforming its approach from problem-based disease care to patient centered health care. In this approach, your goals and your voice are now at the center of your health care. Our focus is on you, the Veteran, and your family members. We want to help you zero in on what matters most to you, and then together identify and address your health concerns and goals. This is our mission, and we want to spread the whole health approach throughout VA as soon as we can.

VA offers state-of-the-art technology and top-flight medical care for the prevention and treatment of illnesses and diseases, but this new approach doesn't stop there. We want to get to know you as an individual and help you explore what is important to you — what drives you and brings you joy? When you picture yourself at your healthiest and happiest, what do you see? We want to work with you to help you achieve not only your best health but your greatest well-being. We want to work with you to meet your individual needs, building upon the conventional medical model and also offering complementary and integrative health approaches, such as acupuncture, yoga, tai chi, the arts, and humanities.

This is the health care we are working toward. Every day, we're seeing more and more examples of how personalized, proactive, patient-driven care not only helps people achieve better health, but empowers Veterans with the support and skills for making lasting changes in their overall well-being. We are working hard to bring these innovations to Veterans across the country.

In the pages that follow, this whole health approach will come to life as you read personal stories about several of the Veterans who are on this journey. We're so excited to share this new approach with you, which we believe brings the Veterans Health Administration's core mission to life: "Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being."

It all starts with a question: *What matters most to you?* From there, let's work together to explore what inspires you to pursue your best health.

Sincerely,

Tracy Gaudet, M.D.
Executive Director
Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation
Veterans Health Administration (VHA)

Faces of Whole Health:

TAMMY

"Instead of just continuing to give you a Band-Aid for your treatment — medicine, prosthetics, things like that — they're showing that they're actually trying to find ways to help the whole person: the mind, body, and soul."

— Tammy, Washington, DC

Introducing **Whole Health Care**

Maybe you're standing where Marine Corps Veteran Victor Hernandez once stood — skeptical of the VA system, wary that returning to it would mean having to prove to others that you deserved their help.

Maybe you share the same concerns that Army Veteran Angelique Pinkstaff once had — that she never really felt a "sense of welcome" walking into her VA medical center in the late 1990s.

Maybe, like Army Veteran Colby Mosby-Lovejoy, you'd rather just handle your illness or your challenges yourself.

Eventually, though, all three of these Veterans — and many more — made the decision to use the health care benefits they'd earned. What they found at their local facilities proved life-changing: VA is transforming the practice and experience of health care for Veterans. Clinicians who were trained to start with the question "What's the matter with you?" are now wanting to know "What matters most to you?"

"People can tell you different things over the years, and you hear, 'Yes, you need to get more sleep. Yes, you need to eat better.' But when [your doctor] gives it to you in the circle and you can actually look at it and connect things, you can see how just tweaking one little thing can affect something else. ... It can generate a big difference."

— Tammy, Navy Veteran

You stand at the center of this new model. Your story. Your values. Your voice. Your goals. For more than three years, VA's Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation (OPCC&CT) has been working to incorporate this approach in everything we do throughout VA.

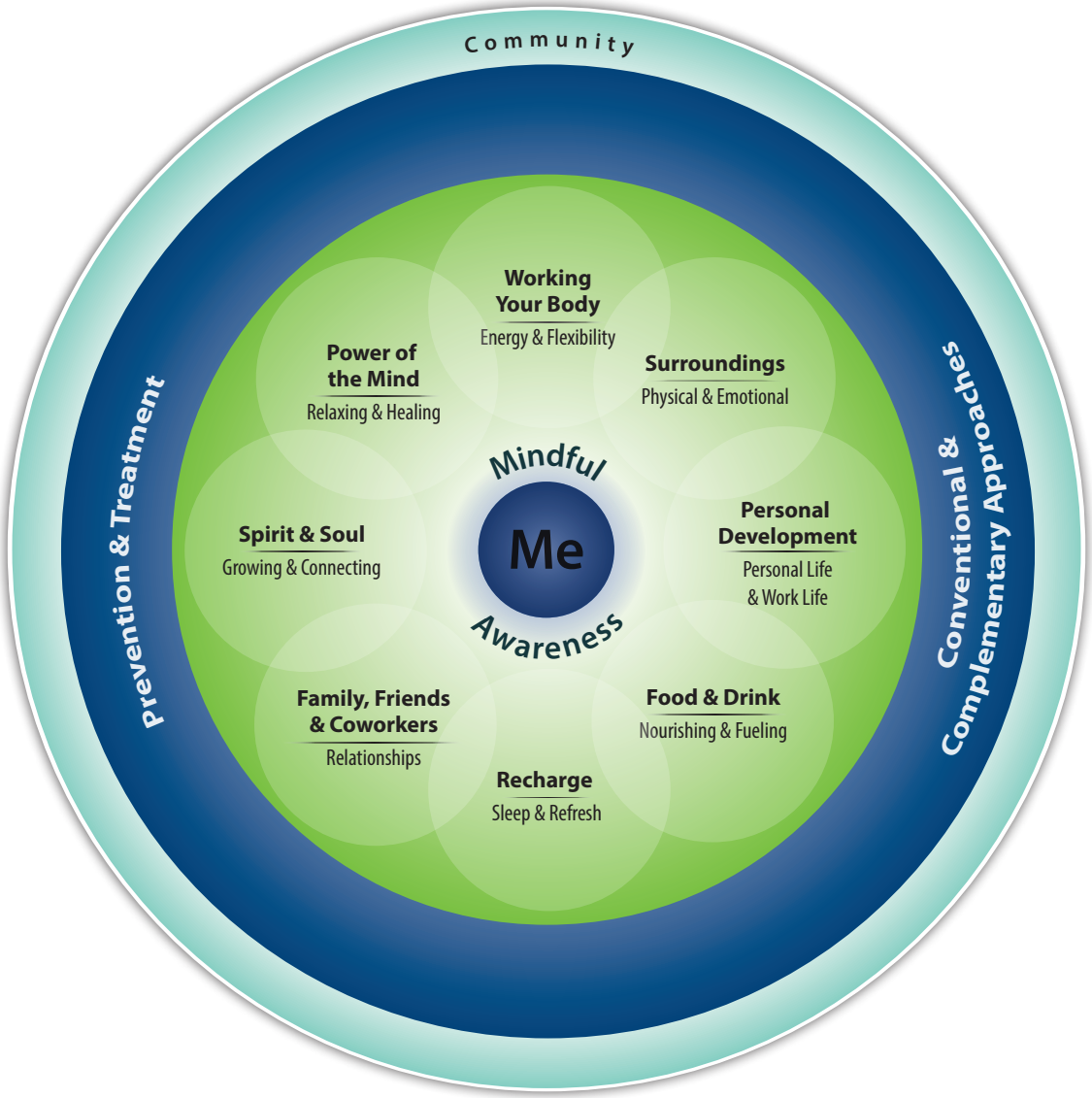
We know that your health doesn't begin and end at a VA facility; you come to VA to address your health so you can live your fullest life. That means sitting down and really thinking about what matters most to you. What do you want your health for? Far too often, we don't think about these things until we're in a crisis. Let's not wait until then. What if you were to explore your values and priorities now, and then line up your life and your health around them?

It also means taking a look at the many different areas that affect your life and your health — from your sleep to your surroundings; from your nutrition to your body, mind, and spirit. Together, we'll come up with a plan that helps you build the skills and support to live your fullest life.

"I just really have had a different experience," Angelique reports. "I sense that somebody's actually sincerely interested in me. ... When I leave, I actually feel better. And that's not an easy task."

In the pages that follow, we'll guide you through this new model of whole health care. We'll also share personal stories from Veterans who have worked with VA providers to find their own way to fuller, healthier lives.

Components of Proactive Health and Well-Being



Improving your whole health starts with you. Take time to think about what matters most to you and why you want your health to be the best it can be.

Take a big-picture look at the many factors that can affect your well-being. This model, of the Components of Proactive Health and Well-Being, illustrates the connections between your health and the different areas of your life, and shows how improving one part can benefit all other aspects of your health.

JEWISH WAR VETERANS
DEPARTMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS
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What Matters **Most to You?**

Everything starts with this question, and a conversation. Stop and ask yourself: What really matters to you? What do you want your health for? What might drive you to seek help, to stick with your rehab, to try a new approach? Your answers — and then sitting down and thinking about what that means to your life and your health — will help shape your care at VA.

"All I wanted was just to have some peace. Some peace. Some real peace like before I went to Vietnam. That's all."

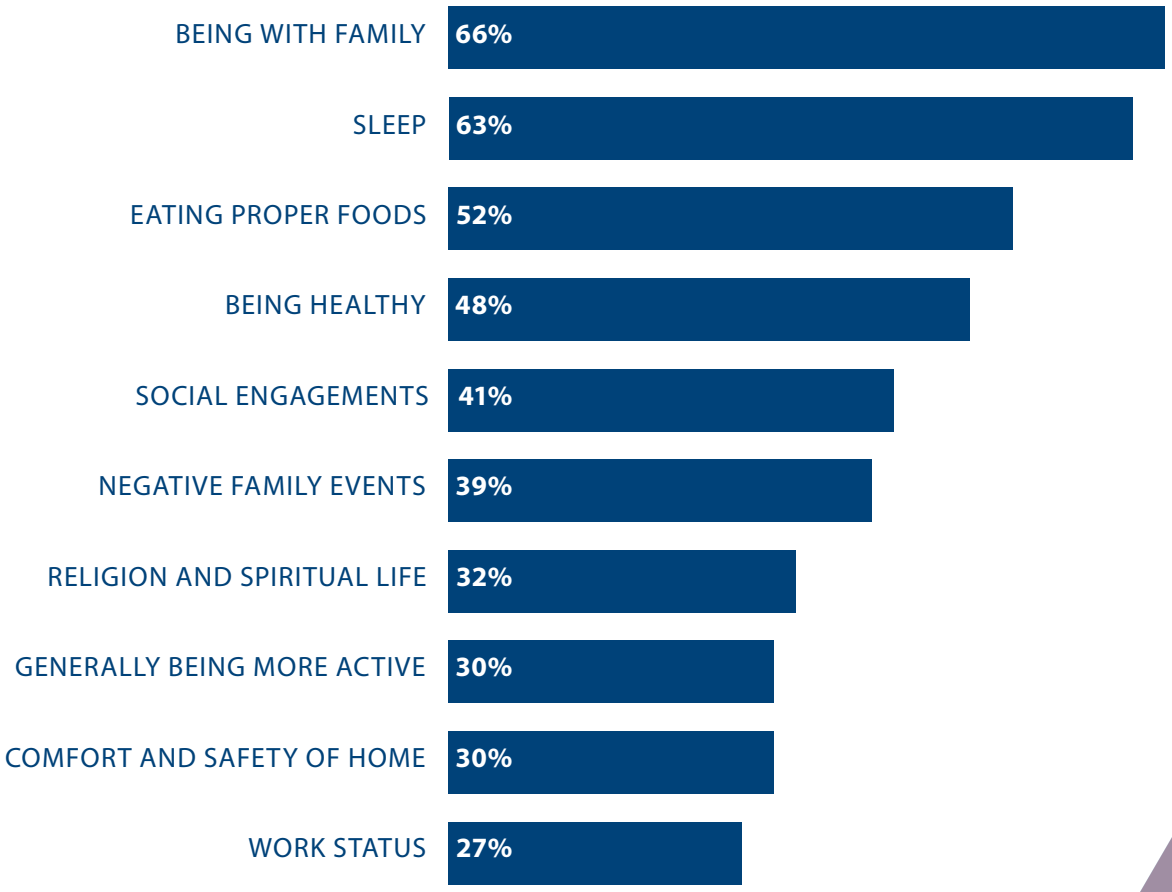
— Victor, Marine Corps Veteran

"Focusing on my recovery from addiction."

— Michael, Army Veteran

In a recent study, the OPCC&CT evaluated which areas Veterans most frequently point to when evaluating what matters most to them. Of particular note: Just 11 percent pointed to a specific medical issue, lending further credence to a whole health approach that considers the full person, not just a particular ailment.

Top 10 Most Frequent Responses



"The No. 1 thing that will drive me to get better is to go back to school. I love school. I'm a pretty big nerd. And I pretty much embrace that. ... I want to go back and give back by going back to school and getting my Ph.D. and getting a job that I really care about."

— Michelle, Marine Corps Veteran

"Just to be able to function without pain every day. To be able [to] go sleep, and sleep, instead of waking up every hour on the hour."

— Alfred, Army Veteran

"To be with people. Two years ago, I couldn't manage people — they were a pain in the neck. I didn't know how to relate to them. Now I want to be a part of things."

— Scott, Marine Corps Veteran

Faces of Whole Health:

DOROTHY

"In our session, not only did [the doctor] just talk about what we need to do — but she showed me why and how I need to do those things."

— Dorothy,
Washington, DC

How We **Get There**

You've explored what really matters to you in your life. You know what you want your health for. Now we'll take a look at factors that can affect your health — your sleep, your relationships at work and at home, your nutrition, and more. We'll zero in on what needs attention and give you the tools to not only help you heal, but also stay as healthy as you can be. Everyone's path is different. In the next three stories, you'll learn how a few Veterans charted their own course to well-being.

The Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center in Muskogee, Oklahoma, noted that one of the most important factors in providing an exceptional experience for Veterans was answering the phones promptly. The facility recently established a primary call center that has helped reduce the abandonment rate for calls from 21.8 percent to only 6.8 percent and has cut the time it takes to answer calls from about 227 seconds to less than 85 seconds.

First Steps to Breathing Easier

There was a time when Dorothy Russell would go out and walk five, six miles. She'd love to be able to do that again.

For years, though, she has battled respiratory troubles. At times, the pain in her chest is unmanageable. She'd like to stand without having to lean because of the pressure on her back. And she'd like to walk without having to take a pain pill.

But when she met Dr. Ilana Seidel at the Washington DC VA Medical Center, they collaborated to identify a few small things that Dorothy could concentrate on first: resting, sleeping better, and focusing on her breathing.

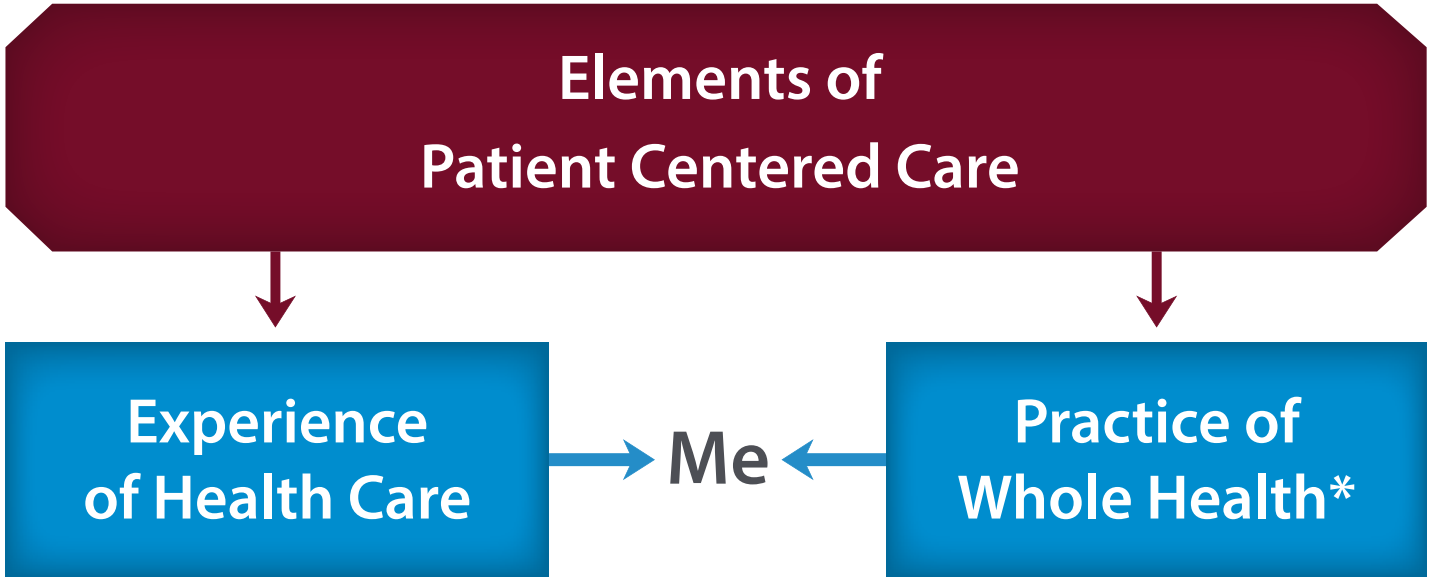
"She showed me some techniques to take home to work on," says Dorothy, who served in the Army from 1985 to 1992 at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis. "She's seeing some areas where we're going to have to work to relieve some of the pressure out of my back, out of my chest."

That's the approach. Ilana first builds a relationship with her patients, then together they explore the many different factors that can affect a person's health. Next, she partners with each Veteran to identify a few attainable steps to get started.

"Research shows, essentially, that if someone has multiple goals, it becomes very, very overwhelming and nothing gets done," Ilana says. So for one patient, the first step might be working on her breathing techniques. For another, maybe it's re-examining his diet.

The approach hasn't gone unnoticed. On the same day that Ilana met with Dorothy, she also met with Tammy Arrington, an Army Veteran who has dealt with serious back and knee issues since falling out of a helicopter in the early 1990s.

"Instead of just continuing to give you a Band-Aid for your treatment — medicine, prosthetics, things like that," Tammy says, "they're showing that they're actually trying to find ways to help the whole person: the mind, body, and soul."



*Personalized, Proactive, Patient-Driven Care

*Enhancing the **experience of health care** means addressing aspects such as the environment at your health care facility and your relationships with the people who work there. By introducing positive surroundings, spaces, and ambience that reduce stressors and other impediments to recovery, we are striving to create healing environments that support and empower you and your family during illness, hospitalization, medical visits, recovery, and bereavement. We are also striving to foster healing relationships with Veterans through effective and meaningful interactions. The ultimate goal: to provide each Veteran with an exceptional experience throughout VA.*

*We want to give you the tools at VA to enhance your **whole health**, to reflect on what matters most to you — your own personal mission. And then, together, we'll create a plan that helps you achieve your health goals, looking at the many aspects that affect your health and life, and building skills and support along the way. We want to help you to be mission-ready for your life.*

Faces of Whole Health:

VICTOR

"My perception has changed. Complete 180 ... I would encourage Veterans that have felt maybe they're in a place right now [with] depression, maybe they're abusing drugs, feeling like maybe their life isn't worth living anymore, all of those things. I would encourage them to try these programs."

— Victor
Los Angeles, CA

Finding His Peace

For more than four decades, Victor Hernandez suffered through the dips and surges of an emotional roller coaster.

After returning from Vietnam at the age of 19, the Marine Corps Veteran struggled with post-traumatic stress. He battled with anger and substance abuse. "I just saw things there that affected me very badly in my mind, and did things that maybe I'm not necessarily proud of," he says.

"It's been an up and down, up and down for the last 40-plus years, and it ruined my life, I tell people. I couldn't go to school. Ruined my marriage. ... I lasted five years in one job, but I couldn't even hold a job for any long period of time to establish any kind of credibility of anything."

Three years ago, friends encouraged Victor to give VA another try to get help for his PTSD. That's how, ultimately, he found his "holy trinity."

After meeting with psychiatrists and doctors, and after being prescribed medication, Victor was referred to three programs that have helped significantly. First, he joined the interactive restoration and meditative movement programs, which emphasize meditation and yoga. Then he tried Healing Touch, in which practitioners use light touch to promote healing and relaxation.

"They all work together to get me to that place where I'm at now," he says. "I know what it sounds like. Yoga? Meditation? Really, try it. Give it a chance. But be committed to try it for a while. Don't go one time and say, 'No, it didn't work for me.'"

These days, Victor finds that he isn't so much of a loner anymore. He's putting himself in situations where he interacts more with people, even joining a network marketing business. He still loves to hike, but now he goes with friends.

"It was a simple goal, just to have some peace. That's all I wanted," he says. "And you know what? I have it now. Now that I've been attending these programs, all three of them, I feel for the first time in the last three years I have had more peace in my life than I've had in the previous 40."

The Whole Health Group-Based Program is a pilot program, led by Veteran peer, volunteer, or other nonclinical facilitators, that is designed around the Components of Proactive Health and Well-Being (see page 7). The goal: Encourage participants to consider a wide range of health-promoting behaviors and select one (or more) as a focus, based on what matters most to them at this time in their lives.

In March 2015, the OPCC&CT partnered with the VHA Recreation Therapy Service and Arts and Health Alliance to host a symposium on art therapy (with support from the VA NY/NJ Veterans Healthcare Network and Johnson & Johnson). The purpose of this symposium was to expand and collaborate with community partners to foster Arts in Healing. Arts in Healing is not limited to visual arts like painting, drawing, and photography; it also includes music, writing, and other forms of self-expression. Watch a video of the event at www.va.gov/patientcenteredcare/multimedia-and-resources.asp.

Through Art, a Voice

Six tours as an Army combat medic, and the sight — time and again — of the wounded soldiers he helped onto helicopters, left David Jones lost and looking for help.

But things began to change the day Rosemarie Rodgers handed him a lump of clay. The assignment: Create something. And later: Write about it.

David didn't have much of an art background, and he never was big on sharing his feelings. But he credits Rosemarie, the art therapist who guided him through the process at a VA facility in New York, with saving his life. "For whatever reason, God put Rosemarie in my life," he says, "and I'm thankful for that."

David eventually molded his clay into a sculpture of a combat medic in action. He then wrote a poem — "What's Left Behind" — about his experiences in the field.

"When I first wrote it down, I felt empty," he says. "I also felt naked is probably the best way to say it, because of the fact that, being a guy, I'm not too keen on telling people how I feel about certain things."

But, eventually, he shared the poem with his family. "For the first time," he says, "they started to understand what I was going through, and that I personally just wanted to be alone on the couch. They started to understand why."

It also opened up a dialogue. When David's mother first saw his art, she had tears in her eyes. "She's like, 'I didn't know you had this in you. Why [have] you been hiding this for so long?'" She then shared how scared she had been while he was deployed, and what it was like to go months without a phone call. "I was starting to understand that they were going through a deployment, too," David says.

As he continues to share his art, David has seen the power in opening up. He has started to find a voice for what he was feeling, sitting there alone on the couch. And perhaps most important, he has found a community of Veterans with similar thoughts and struggles.

"You start to realize," he says, "that that hole that you dug for yourself and you're in by yourself — you're not in by yourself, you know?"

"To all that is wholesome and pure to my eyes became blind — an empty, angry soldier full of rage and hate is what's left behind."

— From "What's Left Behind," by David Jones, Hudson Valley, NY

Faces of Whole Health:

THURSTON

"My main goal was sobriety. And when you're working with seeds and plants and stuff, it gives you the ability to reflect back on what brought you here."

— Thurston, East Orange, NJ

Find Your **Community**

When you arrive at VA, you're not just taking charge of your health care — you are becoming part of a community. We want to create the best possible place for your well-being, and we want to connect you with other Veterans who have shared similar experiences. These relationships, this unique environment, can be pivotal in your journey to well-being. As Army Veteran Colby Mosby-Lovejoy puts it: "Coming here, the community is strong. We're like a wolf pack. We've been through a lot of similar situations, so we can relate with each other."

Seeds to Sobriety

Air Force Veteran Thurston Mangrum grew up on a farm in Virginia and never quite lost his green thumb.

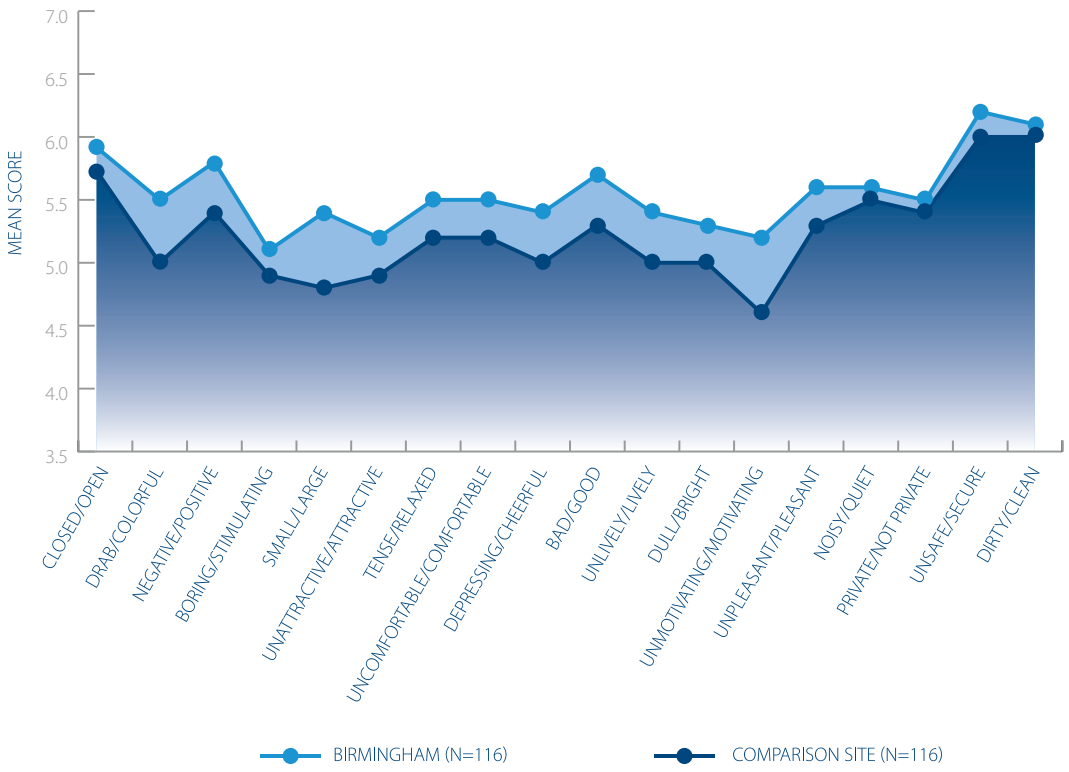
So, decades later, when the Newark Housing Authority offered Veterans and senior citizens the chance to take a master gardening course, Thurston jumped. "It was kind of easy for me, due to the fact that I had originally come from a farm, and I knew a lot of the things," he says. "But the technical aspects, I wasn't aware."

Thurston brought what he learned in his community master gardener program back to the VA medical center in East Orange, New Jersey, where he had come to deal with his drinking problem. Through a collaboration between community and VA programs, Thurston was soon planting flowers in the courtyards and tending to the raised beds. Eventually, he worked with VA to secure a grant to build a greenhouse, where others can get their hands dirty, nurse seeds to life — and perhaps find their own measure of healing. "It's been a privilege for me to share some of the information and stuff that I learned from the master gardeners course," Thurston says. He hopes others he's mentored can take these new skills and secure jobs in landscaping or cutting grass.

"My main goal was sobriety," he says. "And when you're working with seeds and plants and stuff, it gives you the ability to reflect back on what brought you here. I've been sober for eight years, and this particular program here, and this gardening aspect, had a lot to do with it. I didn't have to battle this out in the streets or anything."

It's the ideal outcome: One Veteran, focused on his passion, supported by his community, achieving his goals with VA.

Veteran Ratings of the Physical Environment Were Consistently Higher at Birmingham than at the Comparison Site



VA facilities across the country are working to give Veterans the best possible experience. To evaluate the impact of a more positive environment, the OPCC&CT surveyed patients at the recently renovated clinic at the Birmingham VA Medical Center in Alabama. Patients rated both the physical environment and their satisfaction with the experience significantly higher at the medical center than at a control site.

Watch a video of Thurston's story at *www.va.gov/patientcenteredcare/multimedia-and-resources.asp*.

Reinforcing Relationships

Andrea Wiley remembers arriving at boot camp in 1983 — one woman out of many from across the United States. "We came in as individuals," she says. "But before we left, we became a team."

It was the same way with her husband, Rudolph. They met in the Navy. She came from North Carolina; he hailed from Oklahoma. "We came together individuals," she says, "and now we are a team."

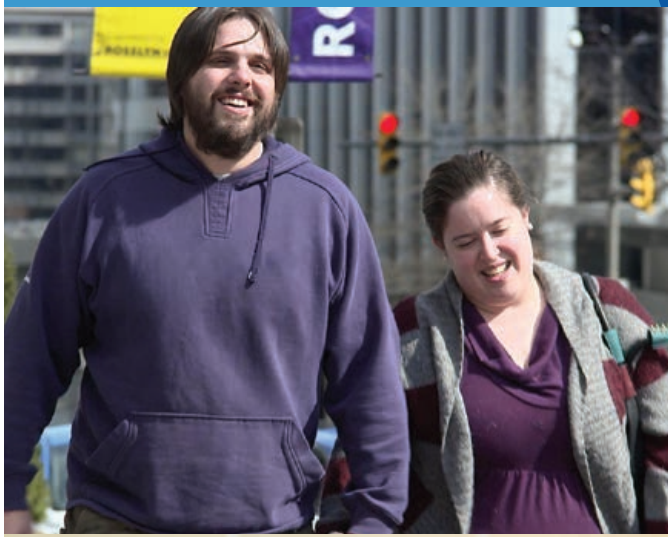
Last year, Andrea and Rudolph spent time reinforcing that husband-wife team when they took part in a "From Warrior to Soul Mate" retreat outside Washington, DC. The program brings couples together to work on communication, conflict resolution, and other key tools for a successful marriage.

"Sometimes we get so wrapped up being mothers and fathers and forget about being husbands and wives," Rudolph says. "And something that we found great about this is, 'OK, wait a minute, it's time to be a husband and wife instead of a mother and father so much.'"

One particularly valuable exercise encouraged couples to say, "I heard you say ..." and repeat what their spouse had just said — a technique to ensure clear lines of communication. Later, one Air Force Veteran joked that he even found himself writing "So, I heard you say ..." in his emails to his wife.

"I got so much more [out] of it than I thought I was going to," says Ashley Sargent, the wife of an Army Veteran. "Not just communication strategies, but just realizing that my husband really was there and ready to participate and ready to listen. That was life-changing."

To better build upon the voice of the Veteran, medical centers across the country have held town hall meetings. The El Paso VA Health Care System in Texas expanded this effort by participating in facilitated listening sessions in early Fiscal Year 2014. Seventy-five Veterans, nine family members, 65 staff members, and eight external stakeholders took part in these sessions.



Faces of Whole Health:

ANGELIQUE

"I know that I have been heard. I know that I am better off than when I arrived. And I feel like I'm in a better place psychologically."

— Angelique,
Los Angeles, CA

Write Your **Next Chapter**

Sometimes, her heart would just grow heavy.

Angelique Pinkstaff would struggle to trust people, to connect with them, to believe they didn't have ulterior motives. "I've been very troubled, knowing the things that I'm dealing with," she says.

She had served in the Army from 1994 to 1998 and first went to a VA facility in late 1999. She didn't go back for 13 years.

"It's not like I'm in trouble, or I'm a nuisance," she says. "Sometimes I used to feel that way. That was the early days, when I would make sure that if I didn't have to come, I wouldn't step foot. And then I'd stay only as long [as needed], and then I'd get the hell out of Dodge, because it just wasn't for me."

Flash forward to today: Angelique regularly visits the VA facilities in the Los Angeles area — not because she feels she must go, but because she's drawn to the active community and the "one-on-one consideration that I'm given." She comes to see a therapist; to pick up medicine; to get physical therapy on her ankles and knees. She has had her eyes examined and her hearing tested.

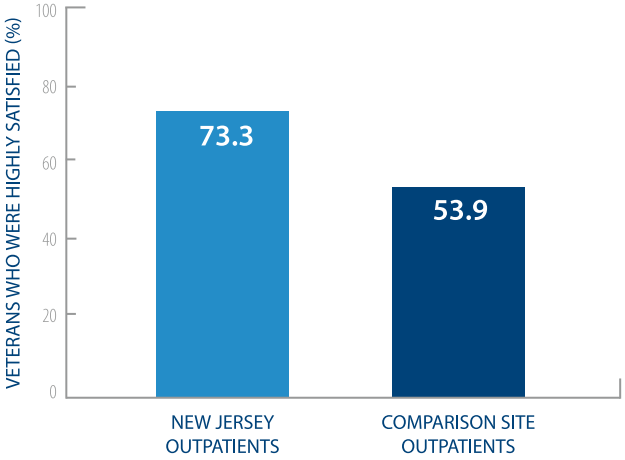
And she has fallen in love with Healing Touch, an energy therapy program in which practitioners use light touch — or guide their hands a few inches away from a patient's body — to promote healing and relaxation. "I actually feel comforted," she says. "I feel peaceful. And I wouldn't change that for the world."

The impact has reached her day-to-day life as well. She finds herself less tense and apprehensive around other people. And even when things get busy at work, there's still "a certain levity" about her that wasn't there before.

After Angelique leaves VA, she says, "I know that I have been heard. I know that I am better off than when I arrived. And I feel like I'm in a better place psychologically. ... There's even a smile on my face. And sometimes I have a smile anyway, but it's just a little brighter."

The Whole Health Coaching course, a six-day course that aims to develop health coaches and health coaching skills, has been delivered at 22 facilities to more than 663 participants. Over 455 staff completed the course in fiscal year 2014 — and an ensuing study is among the first to suggest that training health care professionals can support patient centered care initiatives and practices. Extensive evaluations of course participants demonstrated that the Whole Health Coaching course improved preparedness, self-efficacy, and the use of health coaching skills among participants. There was a significant positive change in attitudes toward patient centered care after the course.

New Jersey Outpatient Satisfaction



New Jersey outpatients seen in the Center for Health and Wellness, a facility that has adopted whole health care practices, rated their experience as the "best visit possible" 73 percent of the time. By comparison, 54 percent of patients gave the top rating at the comparison site.

On the MOVE!

In the midst of the most devastating stretch of her life, Marine Corps Veteran Lana King made a crucial decision.

She had recently lost her stepfather to a heart attack and her sister to colon cancer. Then she too was rushed to a hospital, where she was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes and severe hypertension. She was anemic, and even though she had tried diet after diet — vegetarian, vegan, raw foods — her weight had reached 495 pounds.

"They filled me up with medications, sent me a stack of medical bills, and basically said 'Good luck,'" Lana remembers. "I was unemployed and therefore had no medical insurance at the time."

Desperate, and with the encouragement of her family, she decided to give VA another try, years after her last visit. "That decision," Lana says, "changed my life."

It wasn't easy. Lana worked closely with her new primary physician, who referred her to an endocrinologist. He advised her to adopt a low-carb diet and, more important, located a critical problem with her parathyroid glands. Even after surgery, she battled migraines, anemia, and her weight.

Finally, Lana decided to try VA's MOVE! program. She did the required reading, attended the classes, and listened to a dietitian and a kinesiologist. She learned shopping tips, cooking tips, and a bit of biology. She set goals.

"When I began my journey in 2011, I could barely walk," Lana says. But through the MOVE! program, she started water aerobics, and then tried the elliptical and stationary bike machines. Now she's up to six urban line-dancing classes each week.

Once Lana took eight different prescriptions; now she takes only vitamins and supplements.

"I can't say enough about this team of caring individuals within the Las Vegas VA Healthcare System, who continue to work to resolve my medical issues and assist me along my journey to great health," she says.

In September 2013, Lana started martial arts classes. She's already been promoted six times.

"I'm so excited about the second half of my life — I don't know what to do next!"

— Lana,

Las Vegas, NV

Faces of Whole Health:

JUSTIN

"One of the things that I like to bring, personally, is just I've been there … and I'd like the patients to benefit in the same type of way. … As a Veteran who comes here for care, these are the options that I want to have."

— Justin,
Washington, DC

Coming Full Circle

Justin Heesakker's goal was to avoid surgery.

The Navy Veteran had torn the labrum in his shoulder, so the option of surgery was certainly on the table. But Justin wanted to try something else first: He started acupuncture treatments twice a week for about a month. He got back into swimming. He did physical therapy.

And, eventually, he recovered.

As it turns out, the experience didn't just spare him surgery; it opened up a whole new world. Inspired by the success of his recovery, Justin began taking acupuncture in classes in San Diego.

"I was hooked," he says. "It was just the perfect thing for me to get into. And I'm really glad that I did. It's a rewarding career."

That career has now brought him full circle. Last year Justin accepted a job at the Washington DC VA Medical Center, where he assists with the Integrative Health and Wellness program and helps fellow Veterans with acupuncture.

"I think integrative health, integrative medicine in the VA, is a phenomenal step in terms of innovation and progress," he says. The model shines, he adds, because it focuses on the entire person — and then builds a personalized plan from there. For example: Complementing his own care with practices like acupuncture also helped with his sleep and some of his chronic injuries.

"That's part of why I wanted to get involved, and I'm thankful and grateful for the opportunity to do so," Justin says. "One of the things that I like to bring, personally, is just 'I've been there, done that.' And I'd like the patients to benefit in the same way as much as possible."

"I was hooked. ... It was just the perfect thing for me to get into. And I'm really glad that I did. It's a rewarding career."

— Justin, Navy Veteran

Faces of Whole Health:

DR. ILANA SEIDEL

"It's not about me. It's not about what I think is best. … I have a toolbox in which there are specific skill sets that would help different people at different times. So it's really whatever that person in front of me needs."

— Dr. Ilana Seidel, Washington, DC

Research **Glossary**

Throughout this report, personal stories have shown how patient centered care can help Veterans across the country live their best lives. Beyond the anecdotal evidence, the numbers paint a positive picture about VA's transformation to a whole health approach. We've carefully tracked and reviewed the effectiveness of several patient centered care techniques. Learn here how acupuncture, yoga, mindfulness interventions, and tai chi have all led to encouraging and measurable results for patients. While we are just at the beginning of transforming VA health care, this is the future we would like to see for all Veterans.

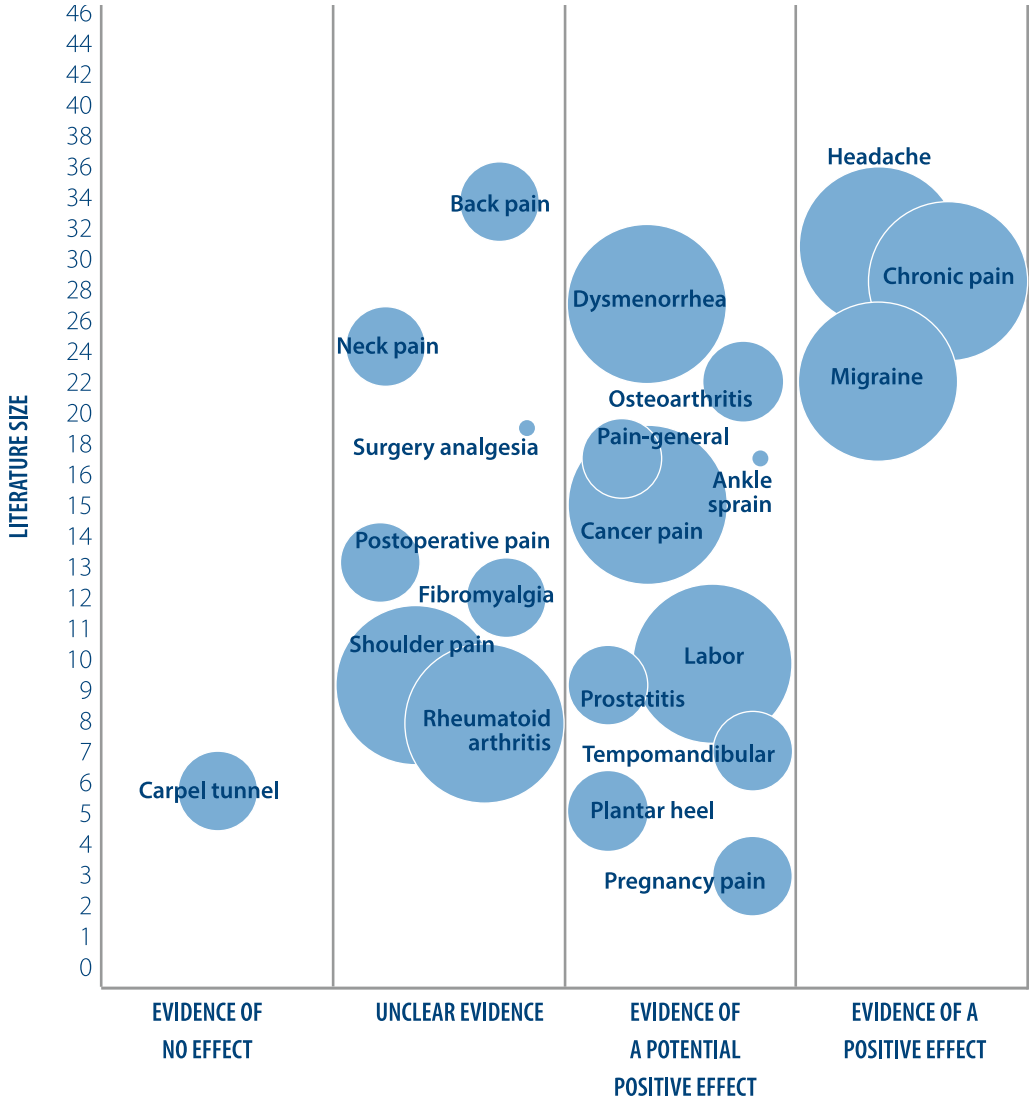
Evidence Map:

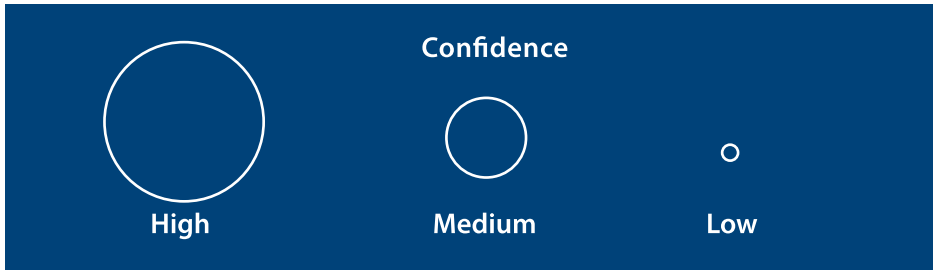
Acupuncture

The term "acupuncture" describes a family of procedures involving the stimulation of points on the body using a variety of techniques. The acupuncture technique that has been most often studied scientifically involves penetrating the skin with thin, solid, metallic needles that are manipulated by the hands or by electrical stimulation. Practiced in China and other Asian countries for thousands of years, acupuncture is one of the key components of traditional Chinese medicine.

VA's Evidence Synthesis Program (ESP) analyzed 65 systematic reviews of studies performed between 2005 and 2013 that evaluated acupuncture treatment for 21 pain-related conditions.

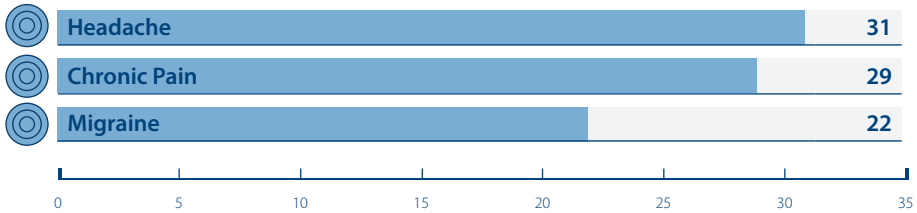
The evidence map of acupuncture illustrates its potential for relieving many symptoms, especially chronic pain.



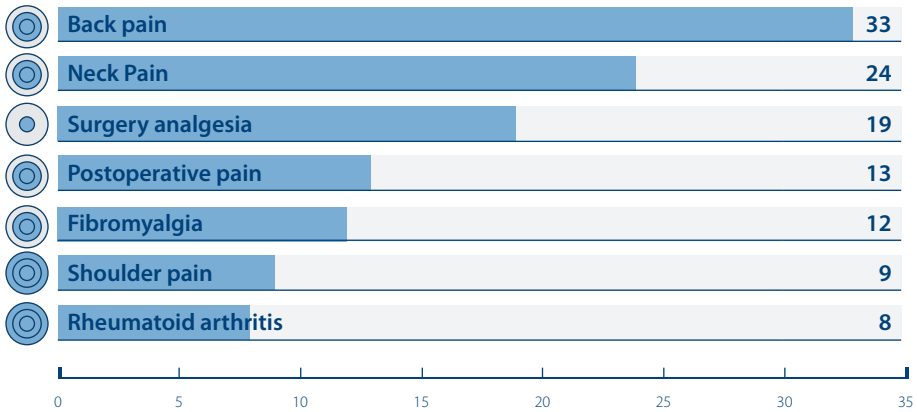


Evidence Confidence Level: LOW | MEDIUM | HIGH

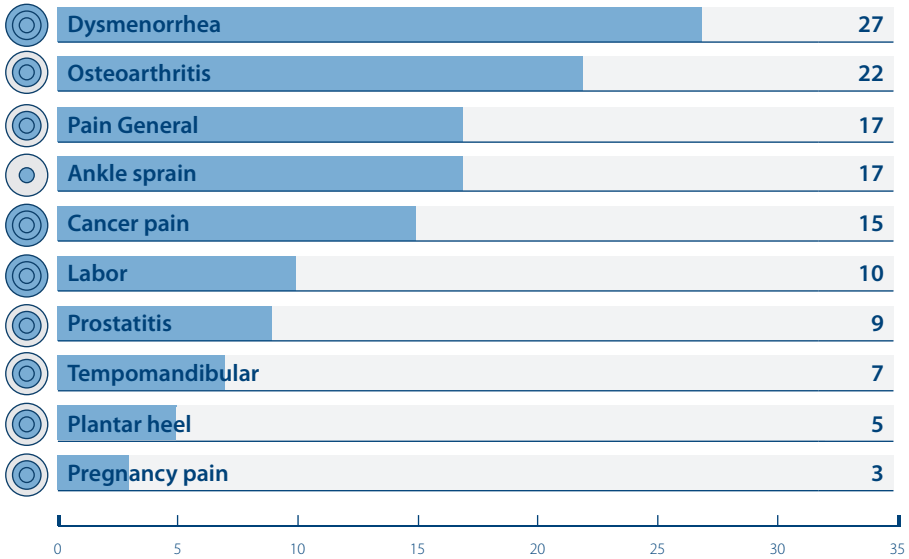
EVIDENCE OF A POSITIVE EFFECT



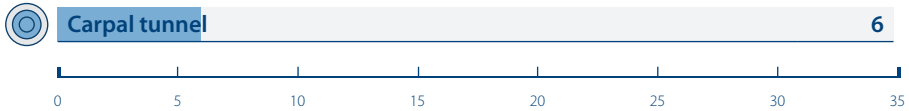
UNCLEAR EVIDENCE



EVIDENCE OF A POTENTIAL POSITIVE EFFECT



EVIDENCE OF NO EFFECT

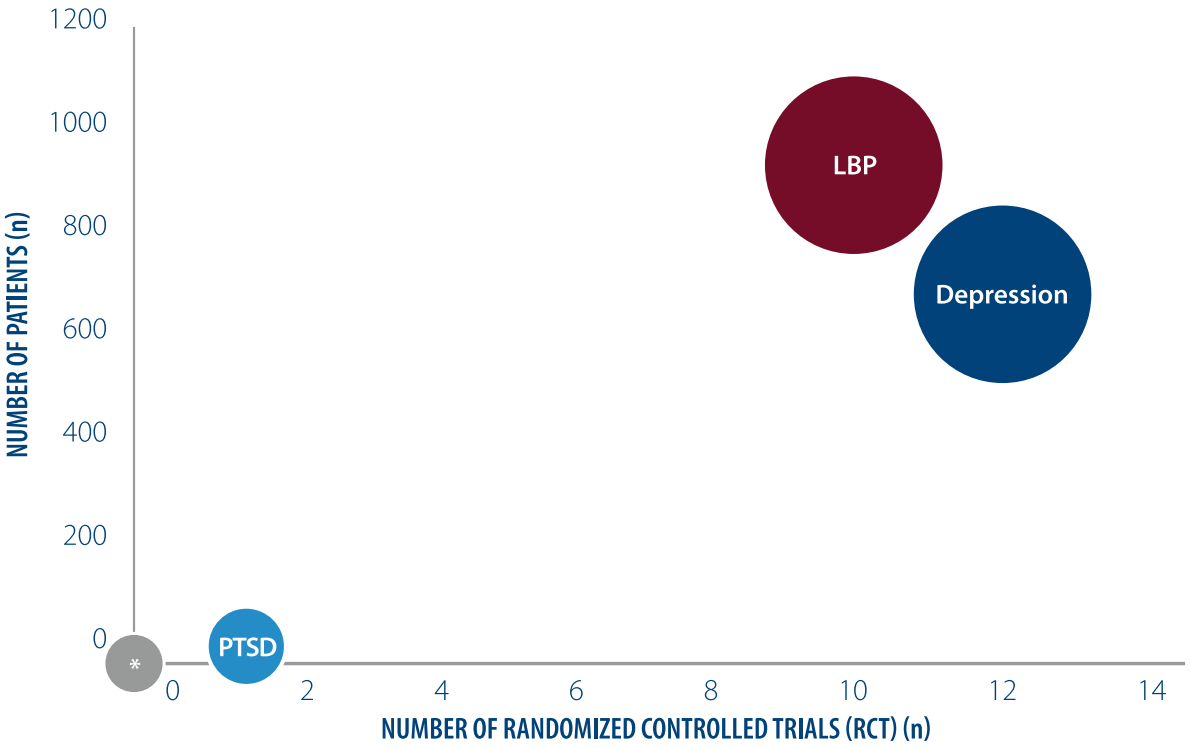


Evidence Map:
Yoga

Quality Enhancement Research Initiatives (QUERI) partnered with the OPCC&CT and Field Advisors on yoga to analyze the effectiveness of yoga in treating various conditions. QUERI examined 23 studies published between 2008 and 2014 that included over 1,600 participants.

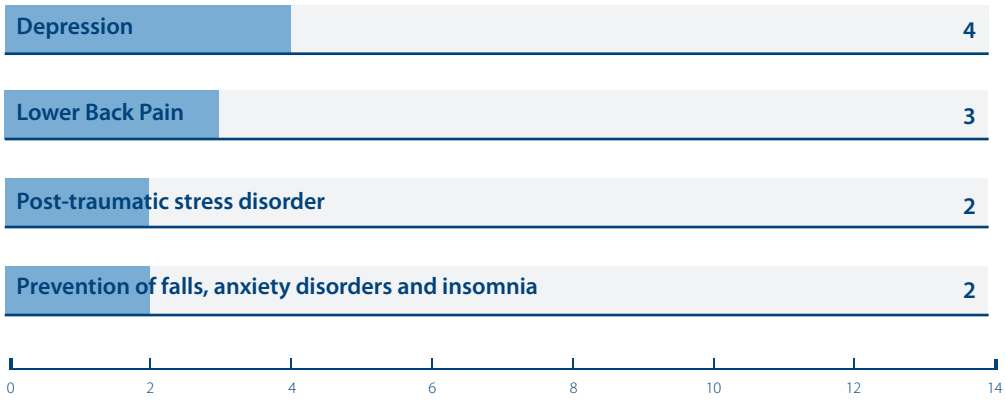
Yoga is a mind and body practice that combines physical postures, breathing techniques, and relaxation.

The evidence map of yoga illustrates yoga's potential for treating two VA priority health conditions: depressive symptoms and lower back pain.

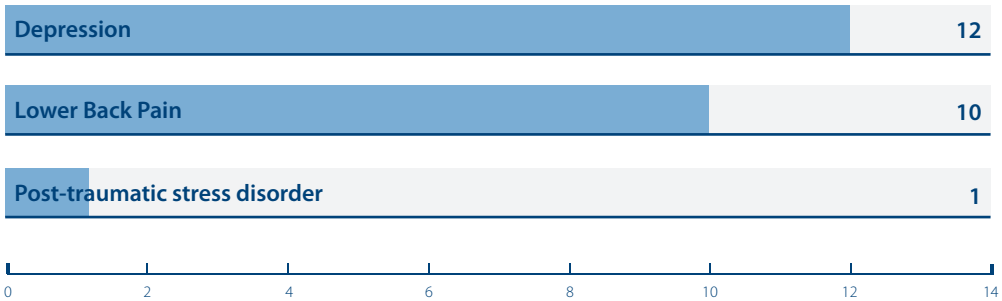


** Represents prevention of falls, generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), panic disorder (PD), and insomnia (no RCTs identified for any of these conditions). Number of RCTs/number of patients for the various other conditions represented were: 1/8 for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), 10/956 for lower back pain (LBP); and 12/619 for depression.*

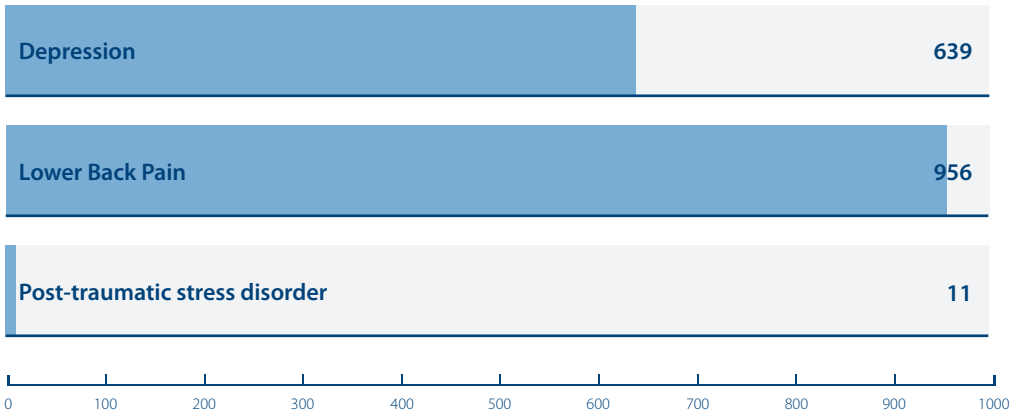
NUMBER OF SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS



NUMBER OF RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIALS



NUMBER OF PATIENTS



The OPCC&CT has worked with the following VA organizations to evaluate outcomes related to evaluate outcomes related to patient centered care:

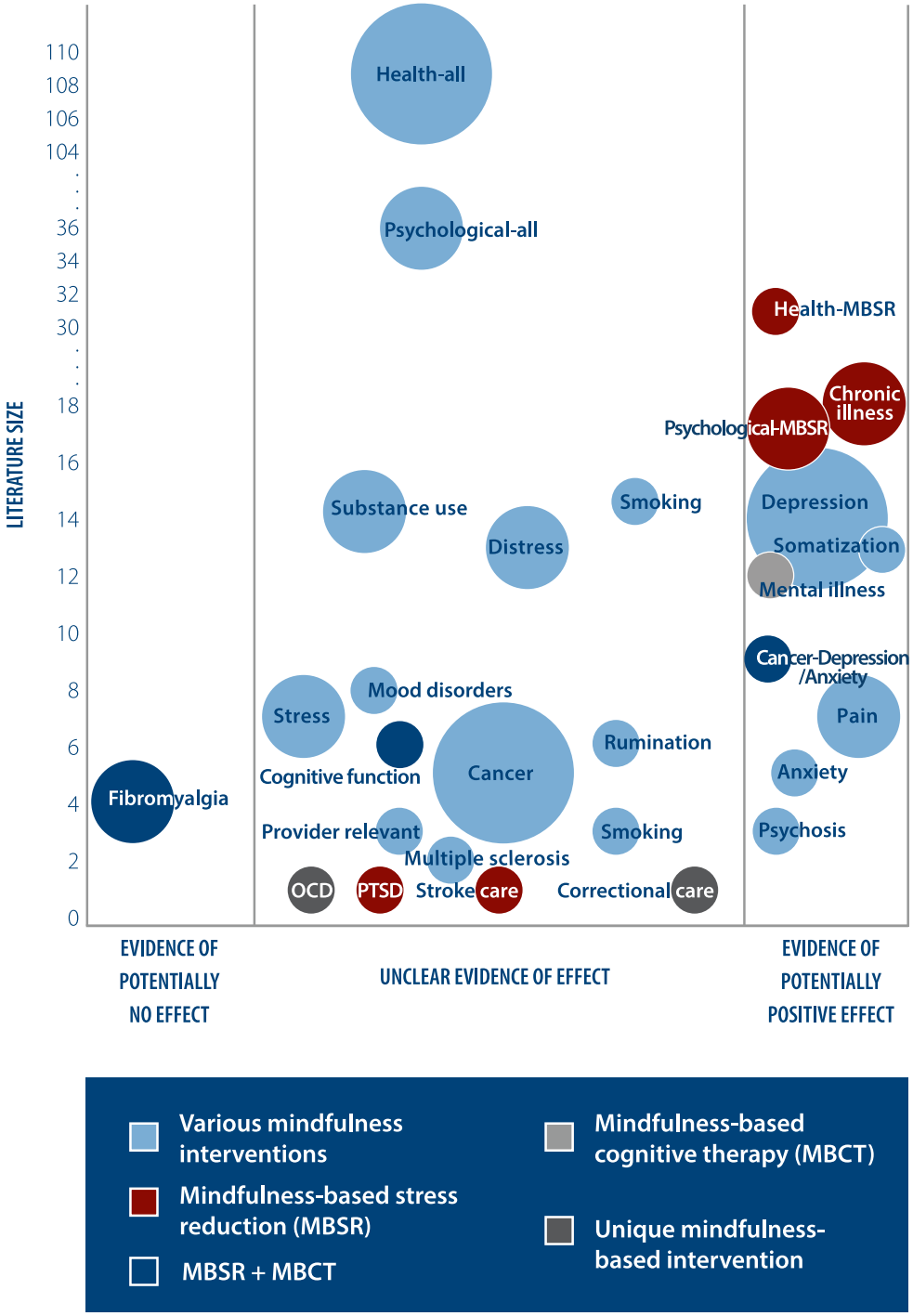
- **Health Services Research and Development**
- **QUERI**
  - **Center for Evaluating Patient Centered Care in the VA**
  - **Center for Evaluation of Practices and Experiences of Patient Centered Care**
- **Evidence-based Synthesis Program**

Evidence Map:

Mindfulness

QUERI conducted 81 systematic reviews of studies performed through 2014 that evaluated mindfulness as a treatment for a variety of health-related conditions.

The evidence map illustrates the evidence of potential positive effect of mindfulness interventions on depression, pain, mental illness, and anxiety.



Evidence Confidence Level: LOW | MEDIUM | HIGH

Types of mindfulness intervention:

- **(A)** VARIOUS MINDFULNESS INTERVENTIONS
- **(B)** MINDFULNESS-BASED STRESS REDUCTION (MBSR)
- **(C)** MINDFULNESS BASED COGNITIVE THERAPY (MBCT)
- **(D)** MBSR + MBCT
- **(E)** UNIQUE MINDFULNESS-BASED INTERVENTION

EVIDENCE OF A POTENTIAL POSITIVE EFFECT

	LITERATURE SIZE	TYPES
Health-MBSR	31	B
Chronic illness	18	B
Psychological-MBSR	17	B
Depression	14	A
Somatization	13	A
Mental illness	12	C
Cancer-Depression/Anxiety	9	D
Pain	7	A
Anxiety	5	A
Psychosis	3	A

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110

EVIDENCE OF POTENTIALLY NO EFFECT

	LITERATURE SIZE	TYPES
Fibromyalgia	4	D

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110

UNCLEAR EVIDENCE

	LITERATURE SIZE	TYPES
Health-all	109	A
Psychological-all	36	A
Substance use	14	A
Distress	13	A
Mood disorders	8	A
Stress	7	A
Cognitive function	6	D
Rumination	6	A
Cancer	5	A
Provider relevant	3	A
Smoking	3	A
Multiple sclerosis	2	A
Correctional care	1	E
Stroke care	1	B
Post-traumatic stress disorder	1	B
Obsessive-compulsive disorder	1	E

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110

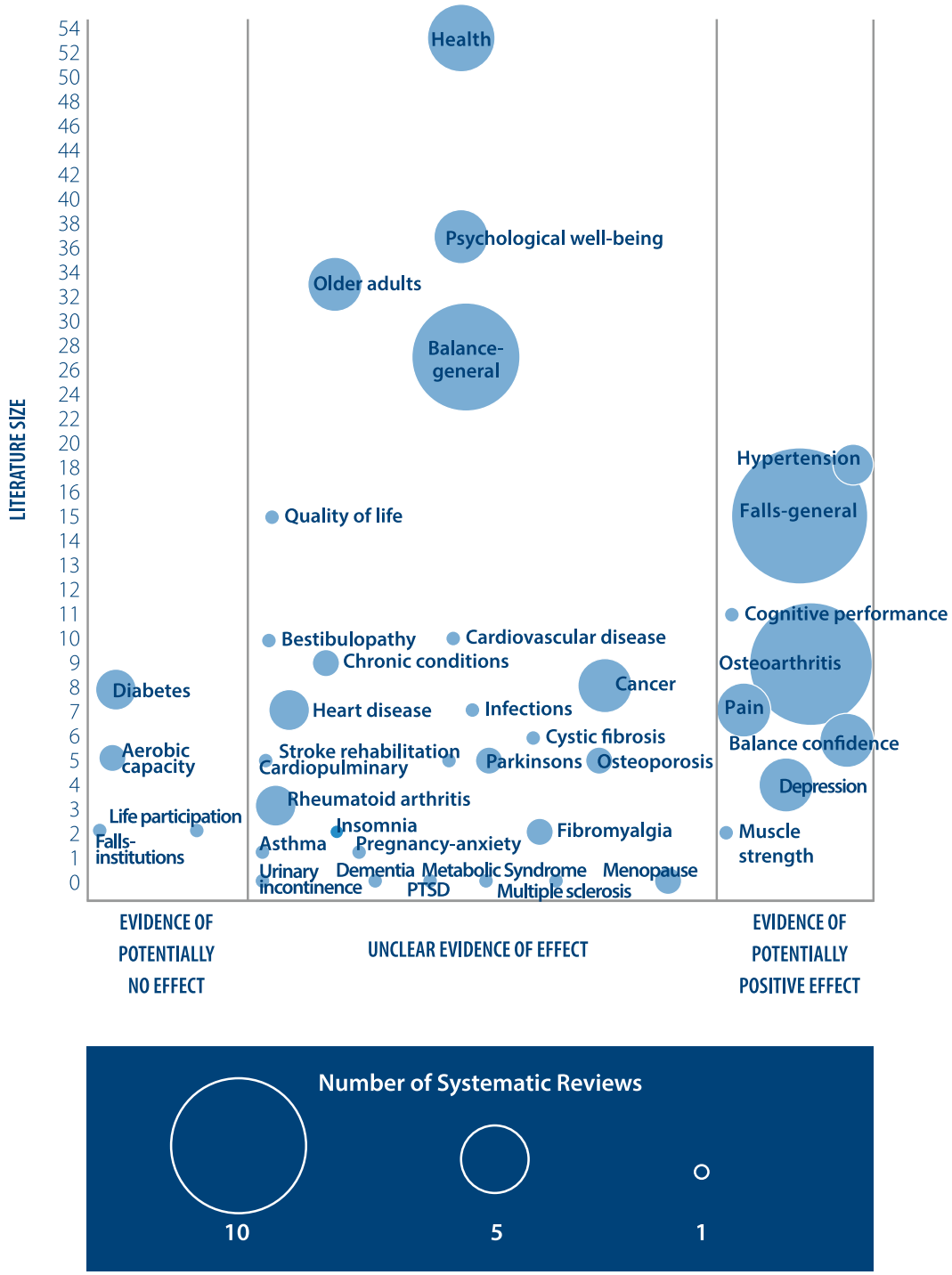
Evidence Map:

Tai Chi

QUERI analyzed the reviews of hundreds of studies performed between 1999 and 2014 that evaluated tai chi in treating a variety of conditions.

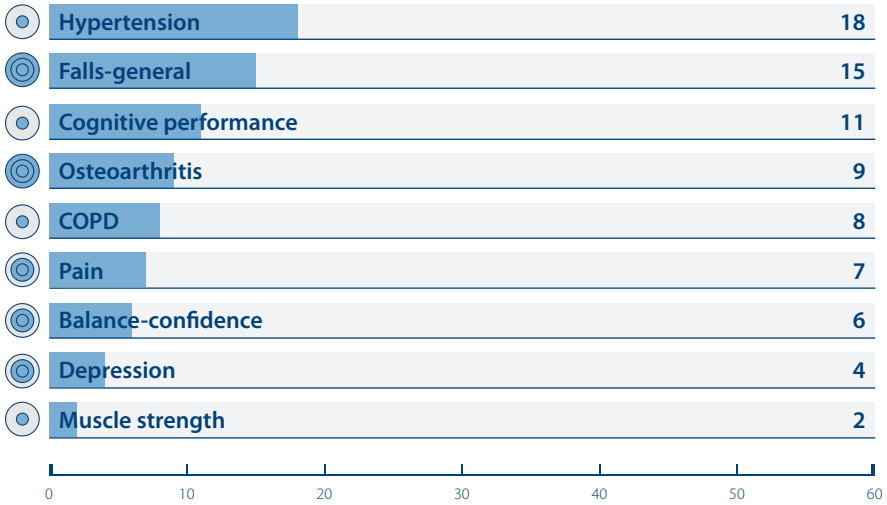
Tai chi is sometimes referred to as "moving meditation." Practitioners move their bodies slowly, gently, and with awareness while breathing deeply.

The evidence map of tai chi illustrates its potential for preventing falls and building balance confidence, as well as relieving osteoarthritis, depression, and pain.



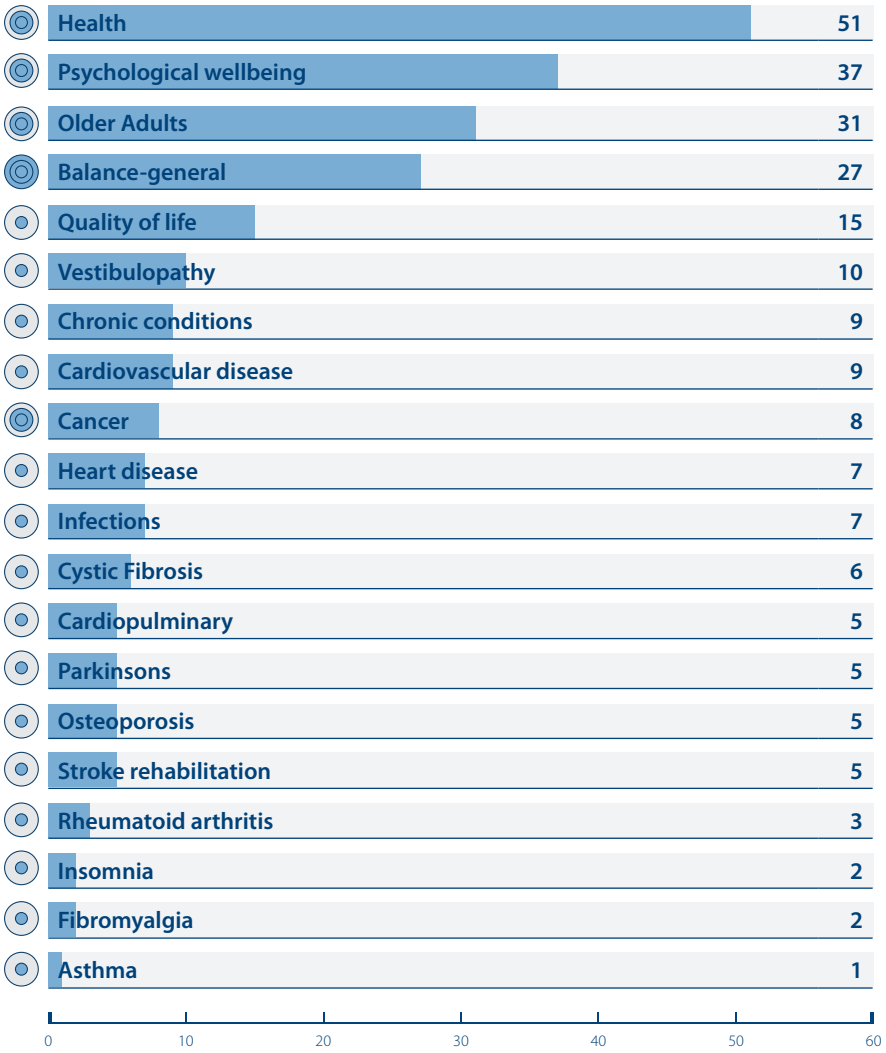
Evidence Confidence Level: LOW | MEDIUM | HIGH

EVIDENCE OF A POTENTIAL POSITIVE EFFECT



EVIDENCE OF POTENTIALLY NO EFFECT

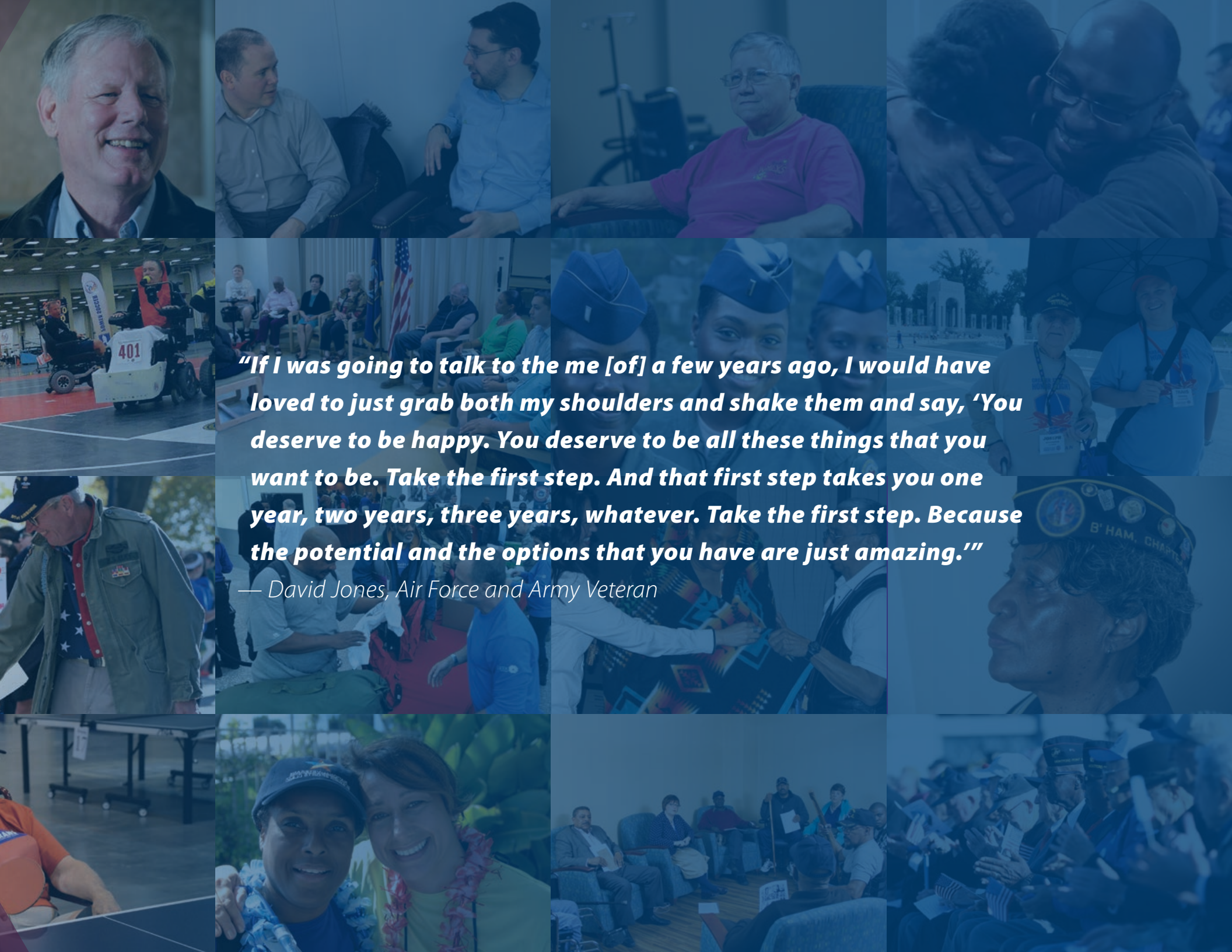
UNCLEAR EVIDENCE



The Veterans Health Administration's core mission is to **"Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being."**

To learn more about patient centered care, visit **www.va.gov/patientcenteredcare**.

Health for Life



"If I was going to talk to the me [of] a few years ago, I would have loved to just grab both my shoulders and shake them and say, 'You deserve to be happy. You deserve to be all these things that you want to be. Take the first step. And that first step takes you one year, two years, three years, whatever. Take the first step. Because the potential and the options that you have are just amazing.'"

— David Jones, Air Force and Army Veteran

Health for Life

Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation-10 NE

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20420

www.va.gov/patientcenteredcare

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