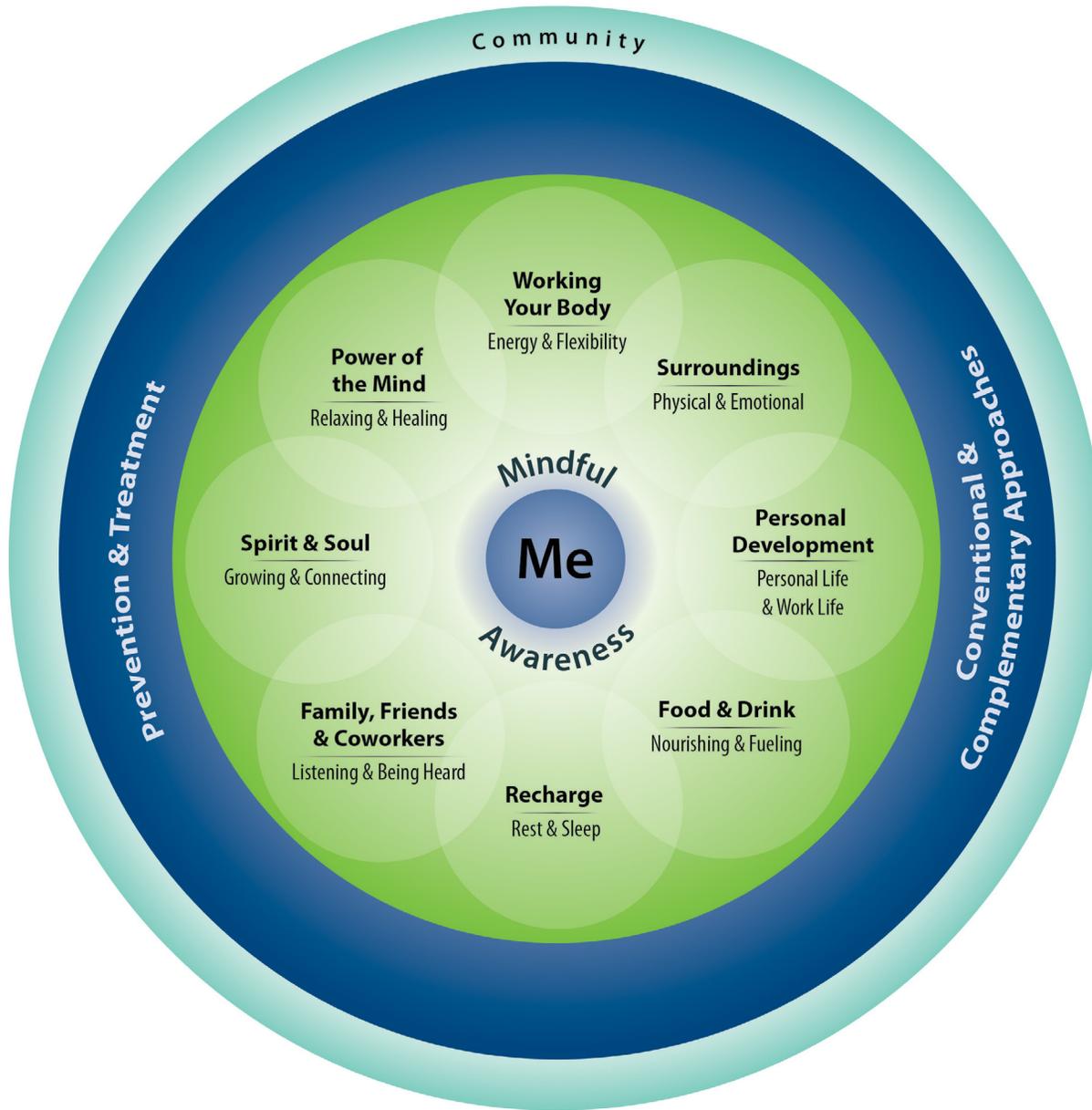


Health for Life

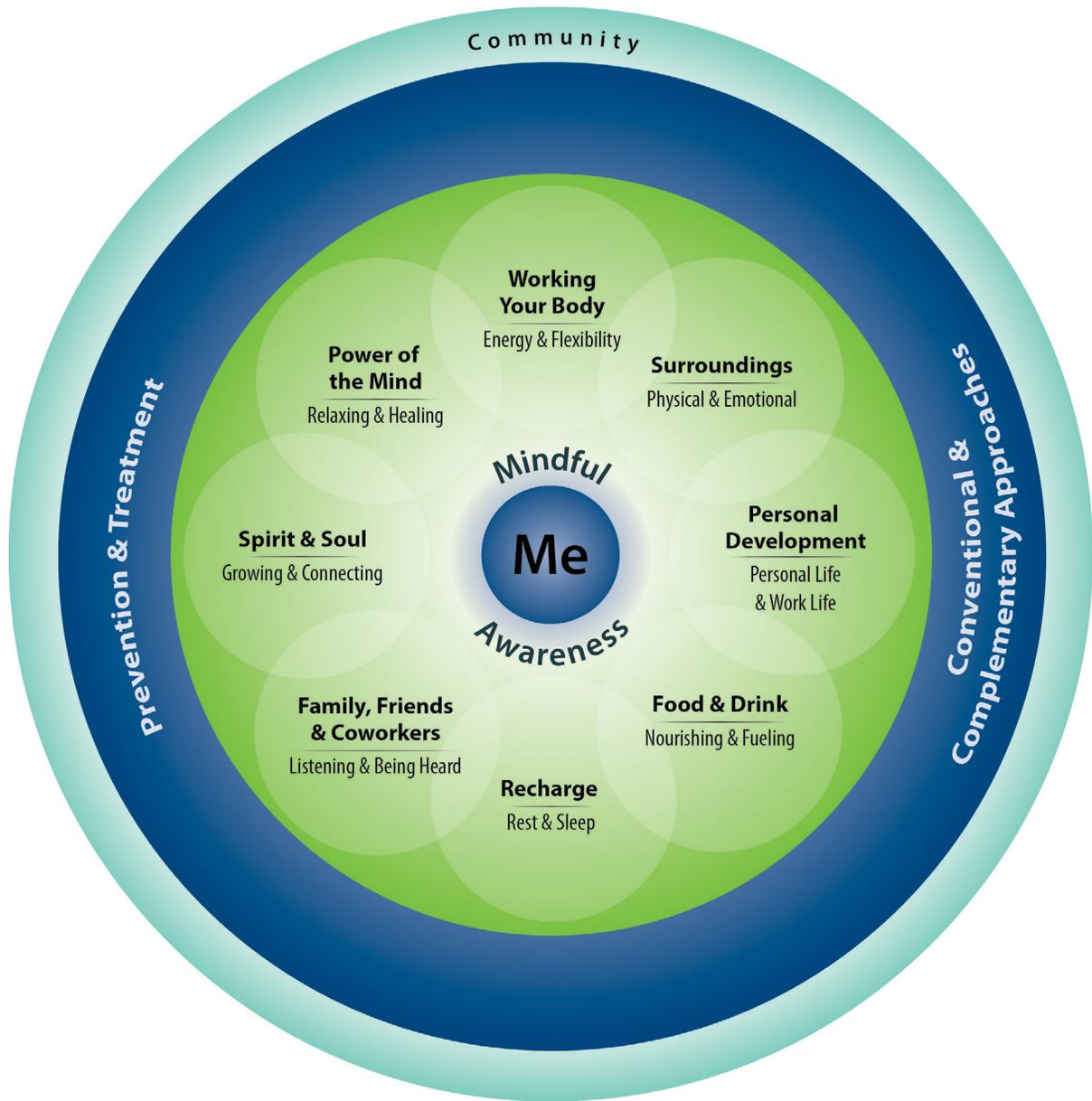
COMPONENTS OF PROACTIVE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



This diagram showing the components of proactive health and well-being can help you think about your health as a whole. All of the areas in the circle are important, and connected. Improving one area can benefit the other areas of health and influence your overall physical, emotional, and mental health and well-being. The human body and mind have tremendous capacity to heal, and these innate abilities are strengthened or weakened by many factors that we can influence. The inner circle represents you, your values, and what really matters to you. The next circle is your self-care—the circumstances and choices you make in your day-to-day life. The professional care ring represents care you receive such as examinations, tests, medications, surgery, and counseling and complementary approaches including acupuncture and mind-body therapies. The outer ring represents your community and the people and groups to whom you are connected.

Click on any one of the eight component areas, the inner circle area, or outside rings of the model to receive specific information contained in this model.





ME

The innermost circle represents each of us and who we are as unique individuals. We start at the middle saying, “I am the expert on my life, values, goals, and priorities. Only I can know WHY I want my health. Only I can know what really matters to ME. And these values need to be what motivates me to be healthy and pursue health care. I am the most important person, the captain of the team, when it comes to making choices that influence my health and well-being, and my medical team professionals are some of the invited players.”

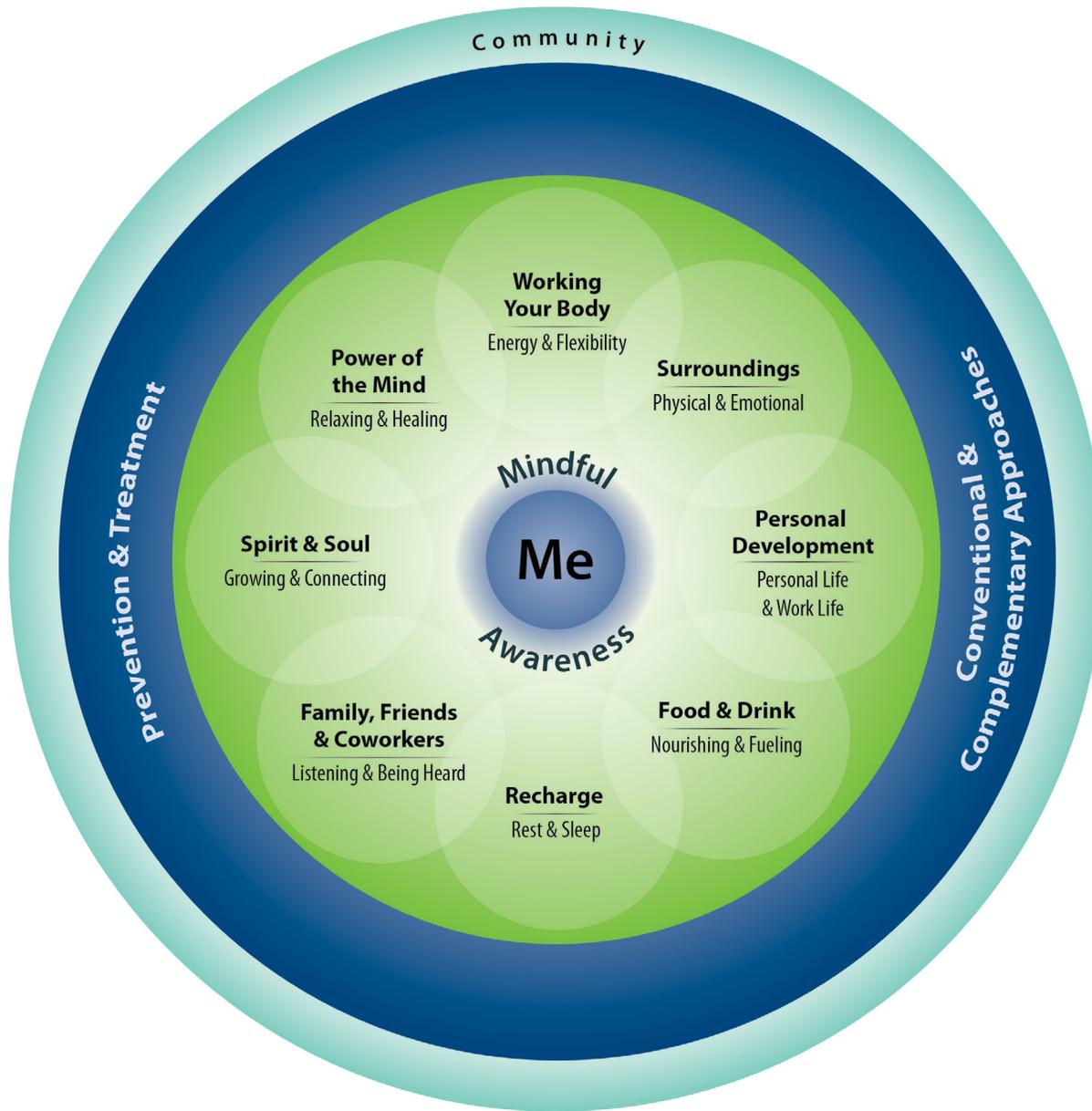
Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this component goal include (but are not limited to):

What REALLY matters to you in your life?

What do you want your health for?

What is your vision of your best possible health?





MINDFUL AWARENESS

Mindfulness is simply being fully aware—paying attention. Sometimes we go through our daily lives on autopilot, not fully present in the here and now. We often dwell on the past and plan out events in the future. We don't spend much time really noticing what is happening right now, just paying attention and observing without judging or trying to fix it. Your body and mind send you signals constantly, but if your attention is elsewhere you don't notice. Then the signals that began as whispers become screams.

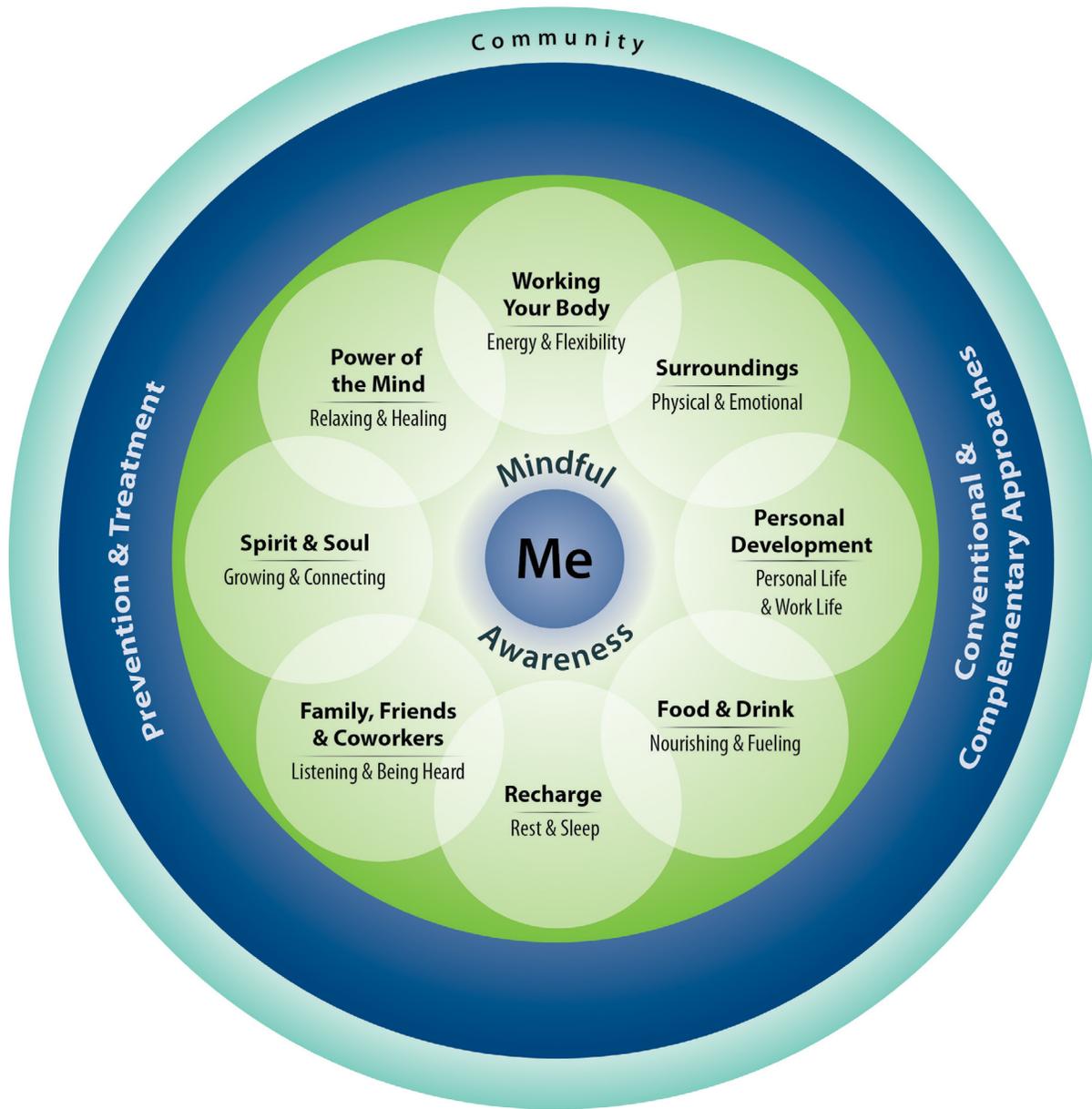
For example, when you miss the whispers of early discomfort or a sad feeling, you miss the opportunity to make a change before it grows into real pain or depression. Being mindful, or aware, allows you to make conscious, proactive choices about every aspect of your health. Mindfulness connects you to each component of your well-being, and to your whole self.

Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this component goal include (but are not limited to):

Mindful awareness is a foundational skill in a proactive approach to one's life and health.

Being fully aware and present in a nonjudgmental manner are critical to mindful awareness.

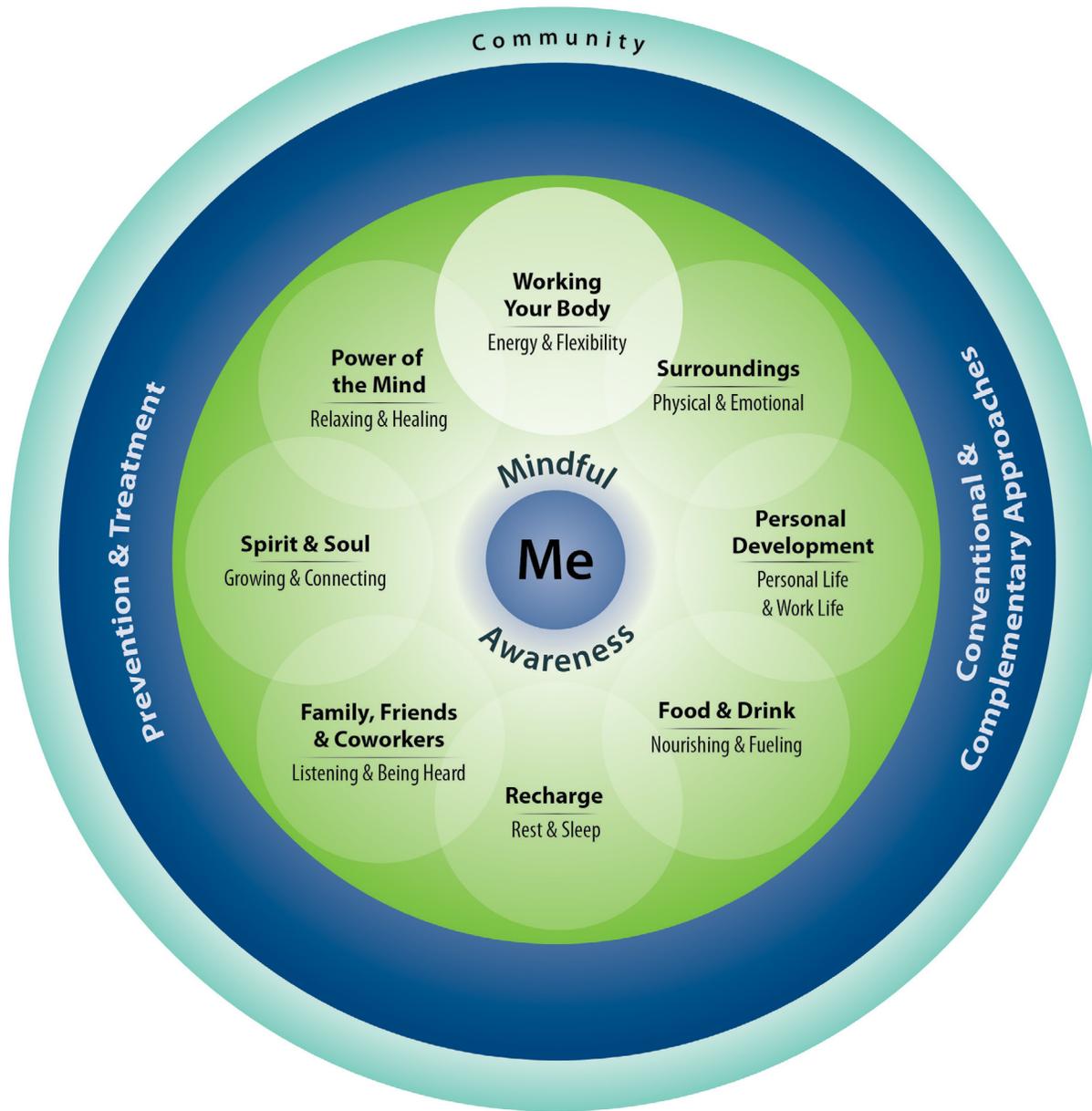




THE EIGHT AREAS OF SELF-CARE

Self-care is often the most important factor in living a healthy life, and it 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. In fact, how you take care of yourself can have a greater impact on your health and well-being than the medical care you receive. Evidence shows that each of these eight areas of self-care contributes a great deal to your overall health and well-being. They can also affect your chances for developing diseases as well as the course and seriousness of those diseases. Consider your values, lifestyle, habits, and motivations in each area. Taking stock of where you are now (your current state) and where you want to be (your desired state) in each of these areas is the first step in living a healthier life.





WORKING THE BODY

Energy and Flexibility

Movement and exercise increase your energy and flexibility, and affect the state of your body and your mind and emotions. Studies show that regular exercise reduces risk factors by lowering blood pressure and cholesterol, two major contributors to the No. 1 killer, heart disease. Physical activities of all kinds are beneficial and increase strength, flexibility, endurance, and balance. Finding what you enjoy and what works for you is important. Your activities may include walking, dancing, gardening, swimming, bicycling, lifting weights, or working out in a gym.

Click on another component of the circle to learn more about how each area affects your whole self.

Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this component goal include (but are not limited to):

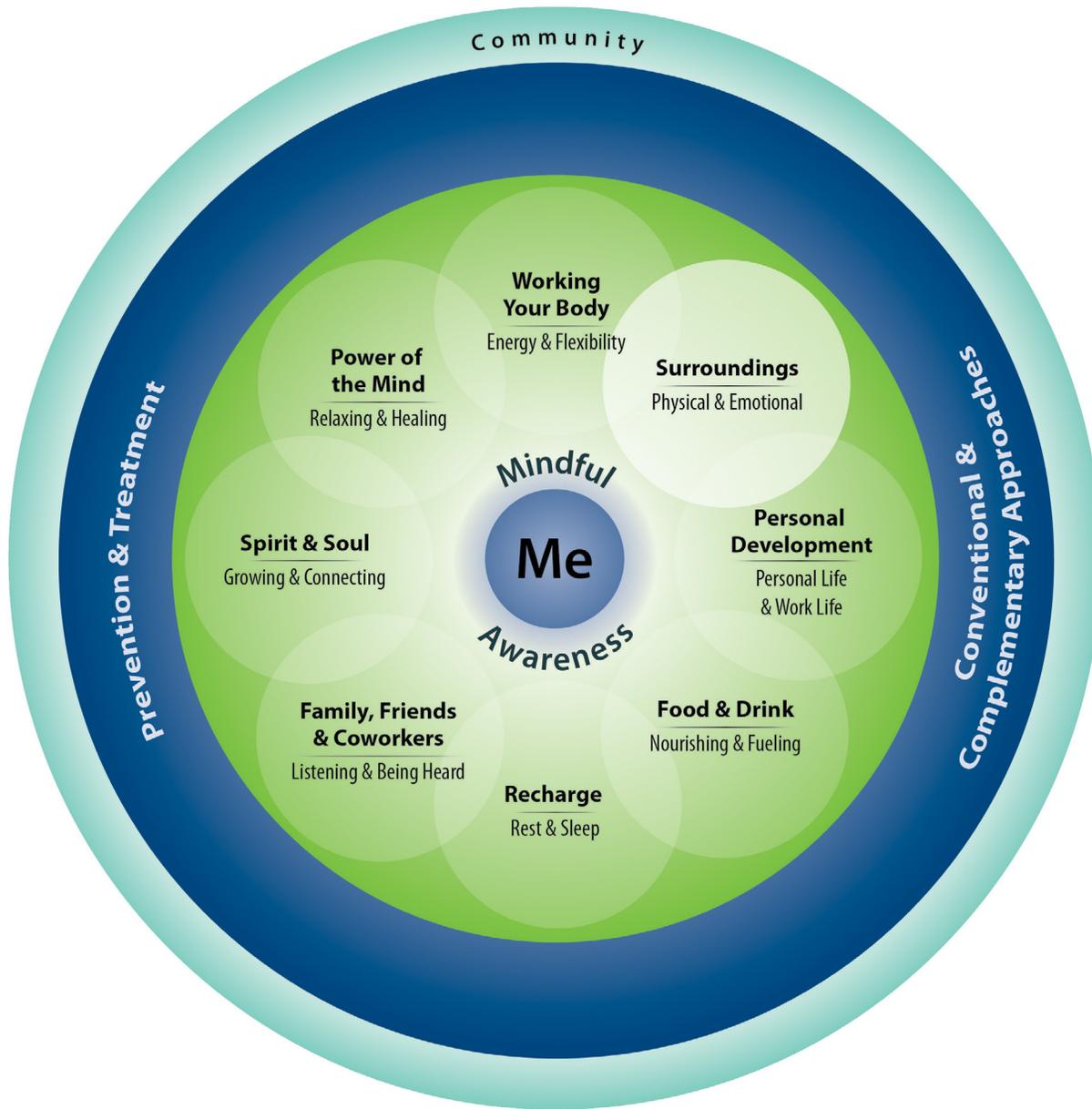
VA National Rehabilitation Programs (e.g., Veterans sports clinics, games)

Recreational Therapy (e.g., equestrian therapy, adaptive cycling)

Exercise and Movement (e.g., dance/Zumba, walking programs, gyms)

Tai Chi





SURROUNDINGS

Physical and Emotional

The environment in which you spend time a lot of time (like at home or work), both inside and outdoors, directly affects you and your health. You may have basic needs such as safety, or conditions such as clutter, noise, smells, chemicals, poor lighting, or bad water quality that keep you from being your best. Some of these factors you may be able to change and some you may not. It all begins with paying attention to what in your environment might influence your life and health, and improving what you can. It matters to have safe, comfortable, and healthy spaces.

Click on another component of the circle to learn more about how each area affects your whole self.

Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this component goal include (but are not limited to):

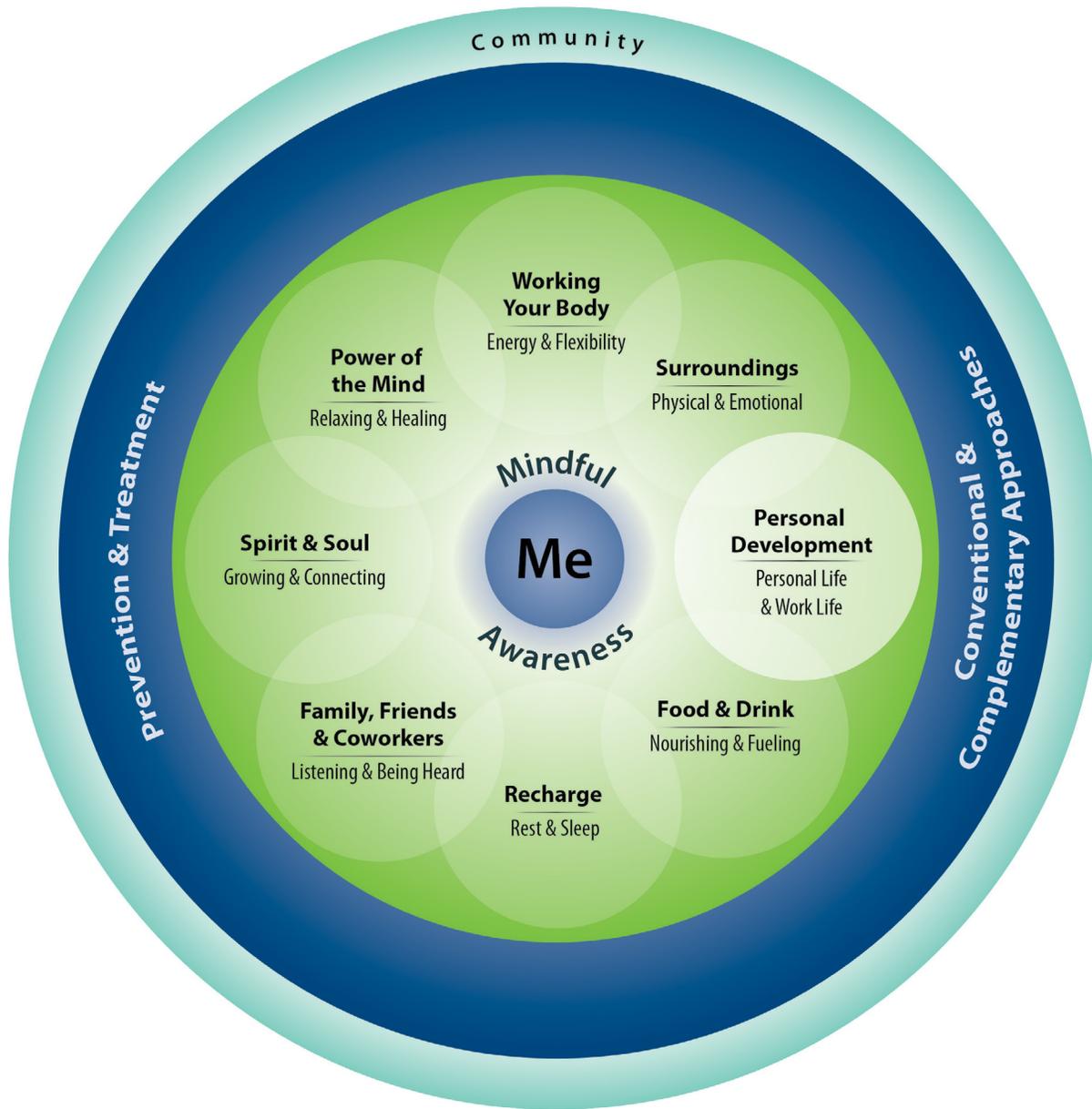
HUD/VASH (Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing)

Creative Arts Festival

VA Home Loans

Pets





PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Personal Life and Work Life

No matter what stage you are at in life, addressing your personal and work life is hugely important. This means taking a look at how you spend your time and energy throughout the day, and whether those activities fuel you or drain you. Does the balance of where and how you spend your energy line up with what matters to you? How do you feel about your finances and what impact does your financial situation have on your life? These factors affect not only your happiness, but also your health.

Click on another component of the circle to learn more about how each area affects your whole self.

Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this component goal include (but are not limited to):

Vocational Rehabilitation

Compensated Work Therapy

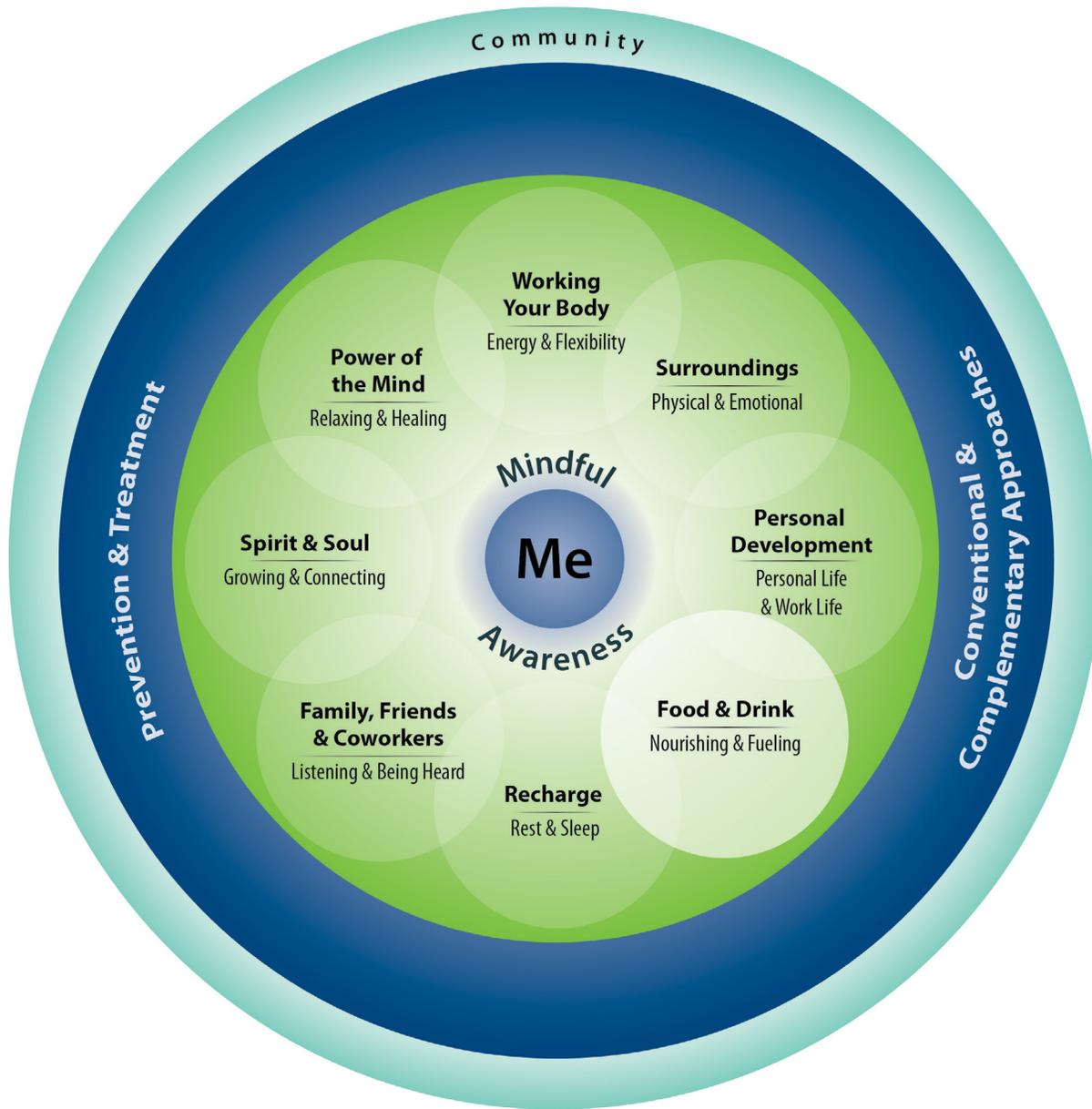
Voluntary Service Programs

Veterans Health Library

Veteran Centers
(career counseling, interviewing skills)

Horticultural Training Programs
(Master Gardeners)





FOOD AND DRINK

Nourishing and Fueling

What you eat and drink can nourish and strengthen your body and mind, and have an effect on your mood, energy level, and physical health and performance. Developing healthy drinking and eating habits that fit your lifestyle, taking supplements that support your health goals, and limiting substances such as alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine keep your body properly fueled.

Click on another component of the circle to learn more about how each area affects your whole self.

Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this component goal include (but are not limited to):

Nutrition Classes

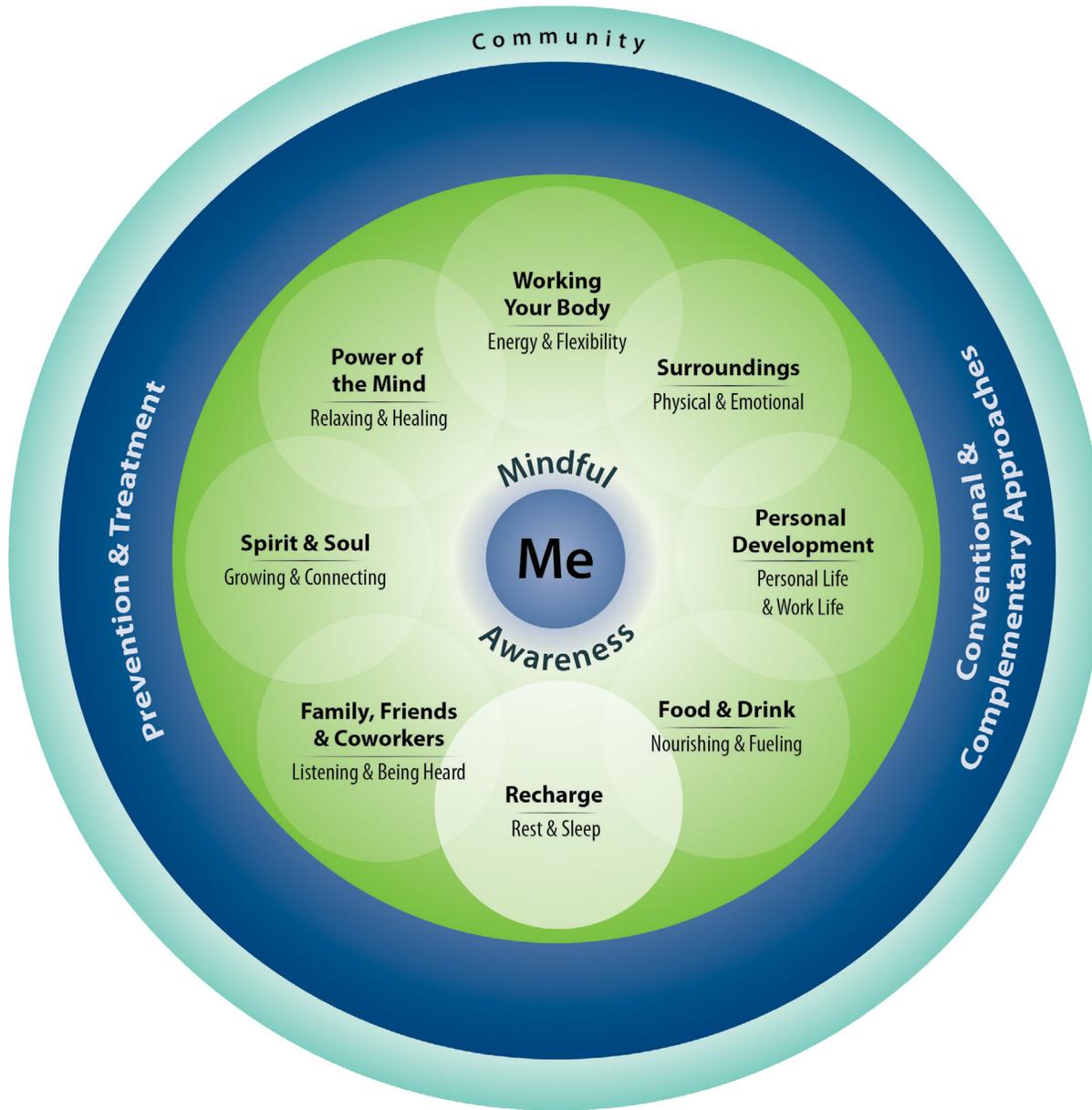
Farmers Markets and Healthy Canteen Choices
(Veterans Canteen Service)

Horticultural Training Programs (Master Gardeners)

Demonstration Kitchen (Nutrition & Food Service)

MOVE! Weight Management Program





RECHARGE

Rest and Sleep

Rest, relaxation, and sleep recharge and refuel you. Sleep is critical for important body and mind functions. Rest, relaxation, and leisure activities create a sense of peace and calm and lower stress. You may also find that physical activity, spending time with family and friends, spending time in nature, completing a significant challenge, or working on a hobby helps you to recharge. Paying attention to the balance between activity and rest is important for your best health.

Click on another component of the circle to learn more about how each area affects your whole self.

Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this component goal include (but are not limited to):

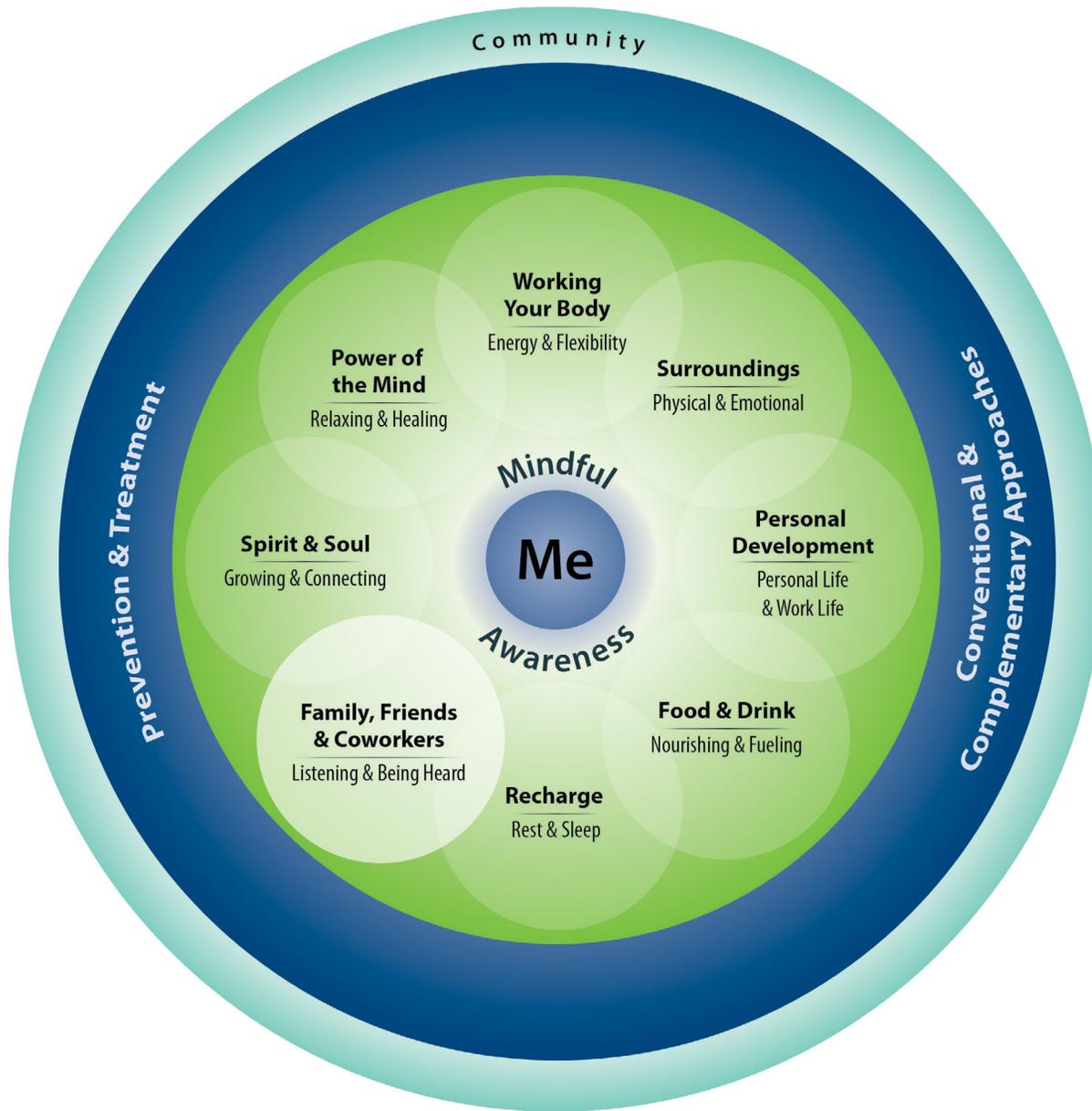
Meditation

Guided Imagery

Progressive Relaxation

Sleep Hygiene





FAMILY, FRIENDS, & CO-WORKERS

Hearing and Being Heard

Your social relationships and whether you feel isolated or connected to others are associated with whether or not you get sick, stay sick, and even how likely you are to die prematurely. In good times and challenging times, it helps to have caring and supportive relationships with people with whom you can talk openly, knowing that they will really listen. Intimate relationships and sexual health are not always topics people feel comfortable talking about. The negative effects of sexual trauma or feelings of inadequacy can be devastating. Positive and healthy intimate relationships can be a source of strength.

Click on another component of the circle to learn more about how each area affects your whole self.

Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this component goal include (but are not limited to):

Peer Support Program

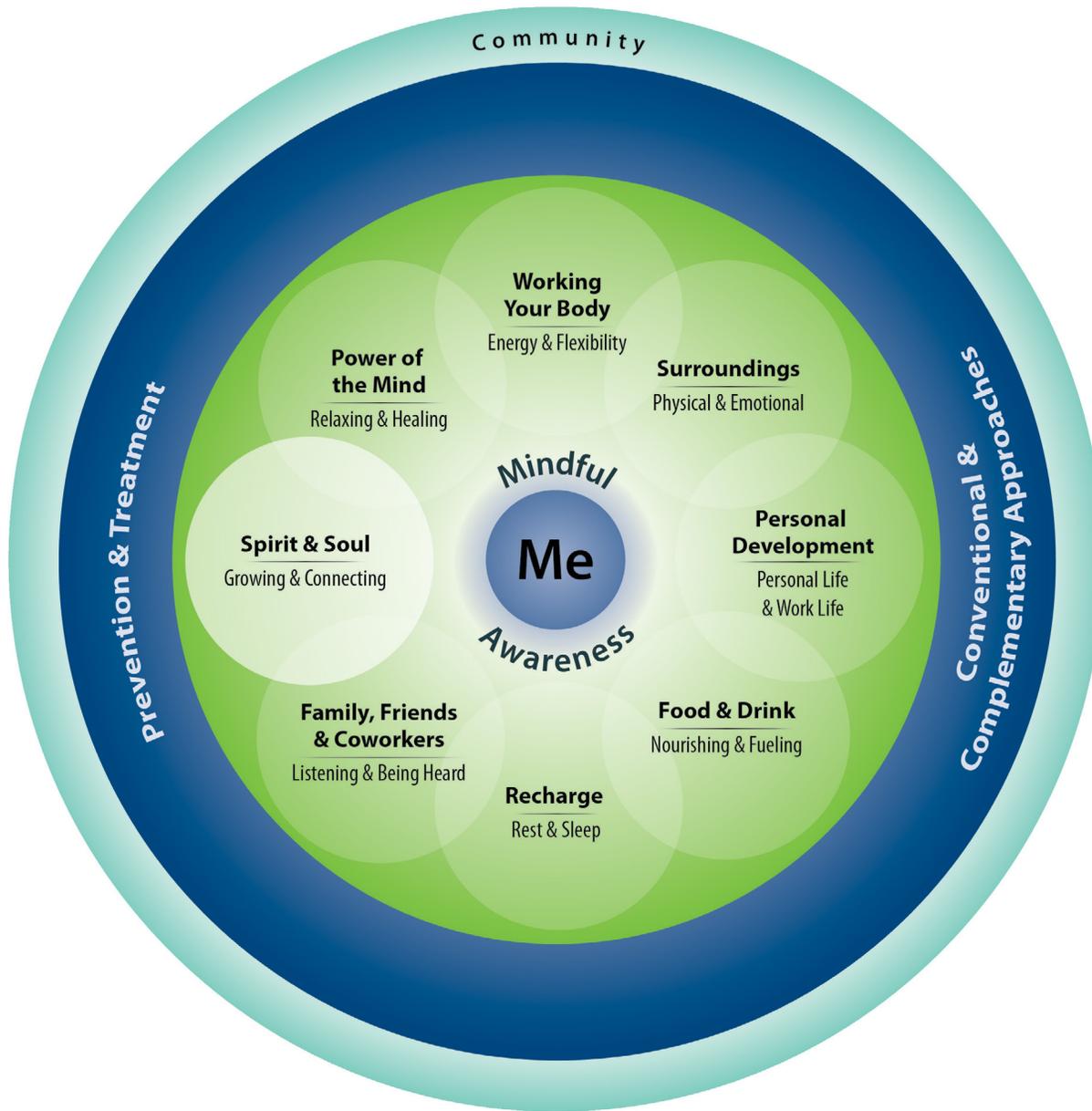
Marriage and Family Therapy

Caregiver Support Program

Care4Giver (Mobile App)

Veterans Center Counseling





SPIRIT & SOUL

Growing and Connecting

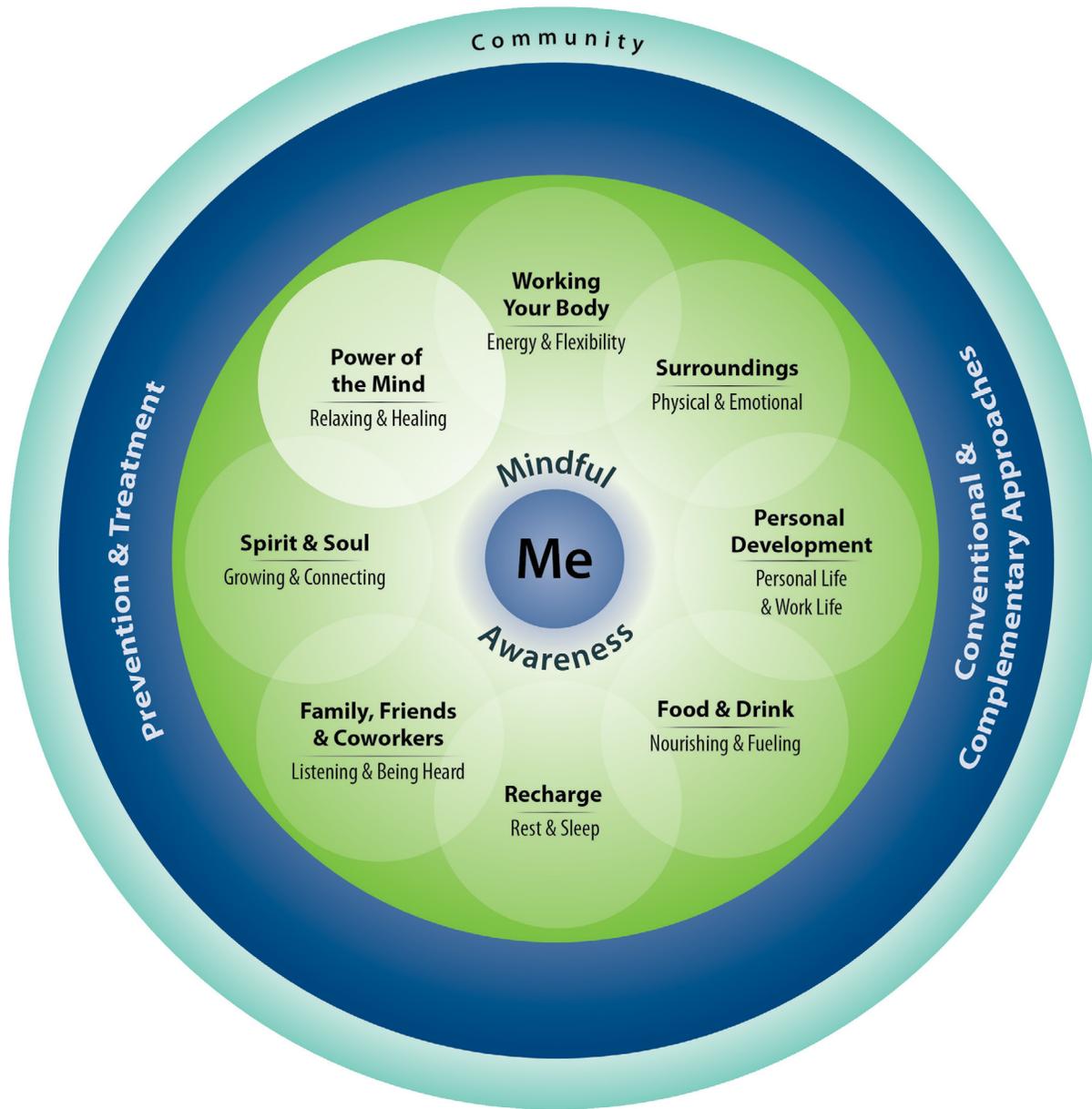
Spiritual precepts such as a sense of meaning in what you do, a purpose in life, and a connection to things outside of you are important to many people. Where do you turn for a sense of strength and comfort in difficult times? Some people turn to faith and religious practices. Others connect with art or music or prefer quiet time alone, or enjoying nature. Your guiding principles for living sustain and fuel you in good times and bad and affect how you treat others as well as your connection with your inner self.

Click on another component of the circle to learn more about how each area affects your whole self.

Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this component goal include (but are not limited to):

- Chaplaincy Service**
- Living History Project**
- Drum Circles**
- Sweat Lodges**
- Labyrinths**





POWER OF THE MIND

Strengthen and Listen

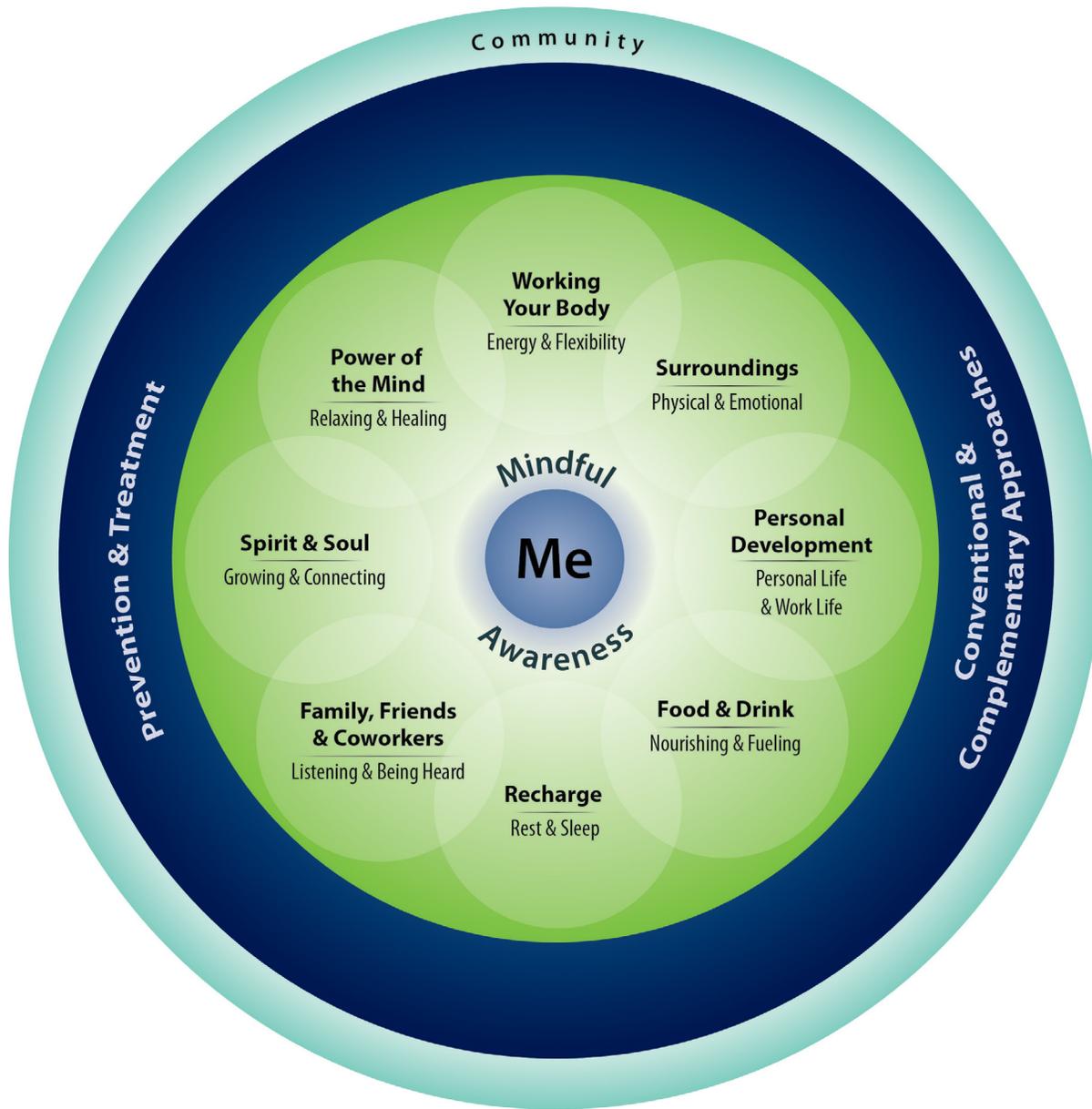
The mind directly affects the state of your body, in both positive and negative ways. Think of a lemon and you salivate. Think of something that stresses you and your heart rate and blood pressure jump. Learning to use this connection intentionally for positive effects is easy. Mind-body practices strengthen the communication between your body and brain. Think about highly trained athletes or warriors who use the power of their mind to visualize success, or people who can do the same to lower their blood pressure or control pain. You can learn to hone your body's ability to heal and cope better with mental and physical stress by using mind-body techniques.

Click on another component of the circle to learn more about how each area affects your whole self.

Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this component goal include (but are not limited to):

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) | Tai Chi, Yoga, Qi Gong |
| Stress Management Programs | Meditation |
| Biofeedback Programs | Guided Imagery Tools |
| Relaxation Breathing | Mantram Repetition |
| | Breathe2Relax (Mobile App) |

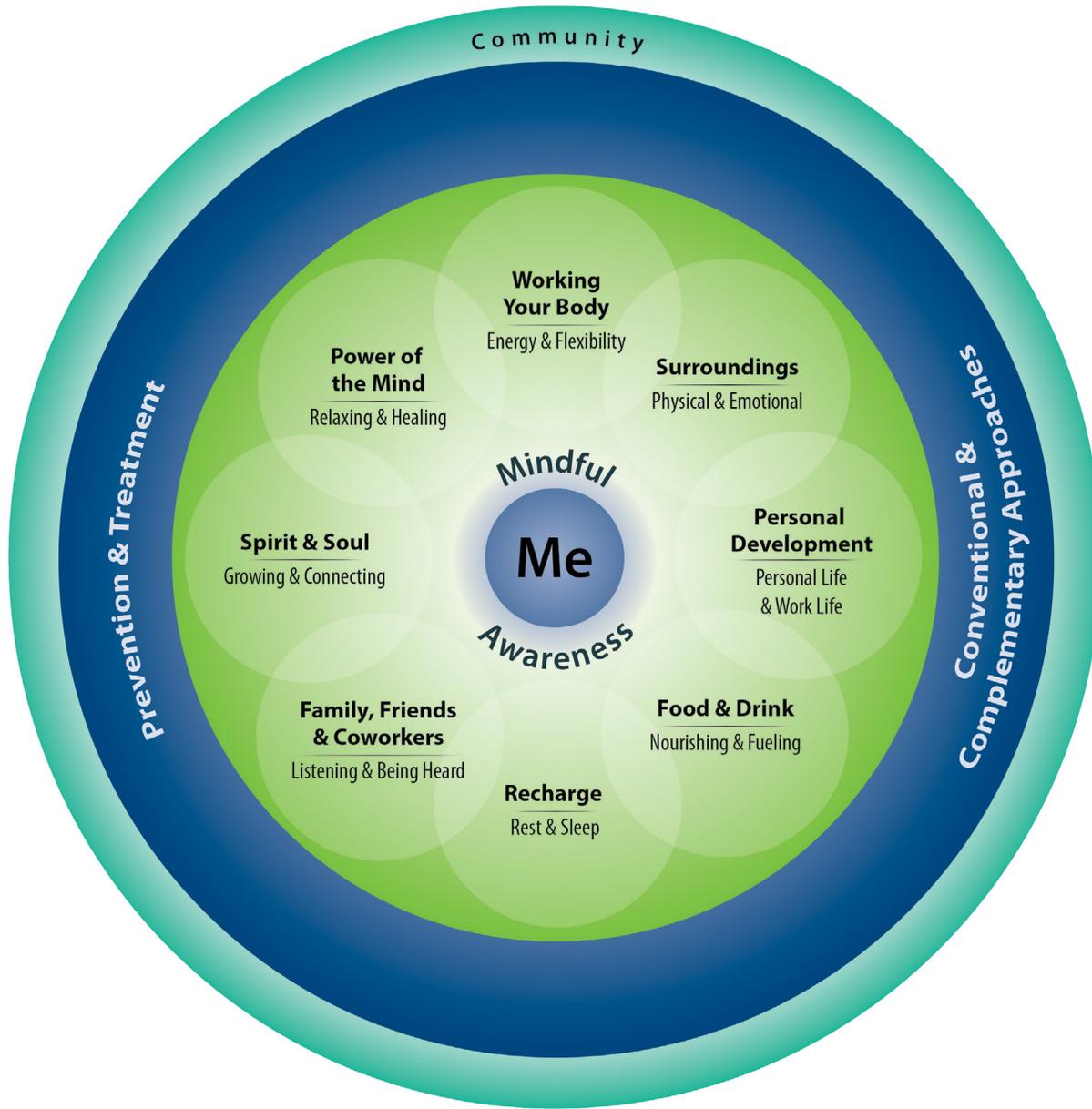




PROFESSIONAL CARE

The professional care ring represents a relationship you maintain with your health care team or other specialists who are part of your team. Such support can include preventive care (immunizations, weight control, and not smoking), diagnostics and testing (such as blood pressure readings and cancer screenings including Pap smears and colonoscopies), interventions, and treatments for the full range of conditions or diseases. Drawing on the best and most effective treatments or approaches is critical, and includes traditional or conventional services—such as medications, counseling, and surgery—as well as complementary approaches—such as acupuncture, supplements, and mind-body therapies. The plans to manage, treat, and prevent disease all include strategies rooted in your self-care.





COMMUNITY

The outer ring represents your community and the people, customs, cultures, groups, organizations, causes, governments, and locations you are connected to. For some people, their community is nearby and local; for others it includes people and things that are far away. Today, with the Internet, including Skype and Facebook, people can have connections all around the world. Your community is more than the places you live, work, and worship: It includes the people and groups you are connected to, those on whom you rely and who rely on you.

