

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



## *Personal Health Inventory*



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Developed by the Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation

The Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation (OPCC&CT) works with VHA leadership and the field in support of the strategic goals to provide personalized, proactive, patient-driven health care. The future vision of VA health care transforms the organization from a problem-based disease care system to one that is patient centered and focused on Whole Health.

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*As a Veteran, you committed your life to mission success  
in defense of our country.*

*Now, we can help you be mission ready for your life,  
optimizing your health in service of what matters to you.*

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handout from the "Personalized Health Plan Manual," © 2010 Duke Integrative Medicine/Duke University Medical Center.*

## YOUR MISSION *FOR LIFE*

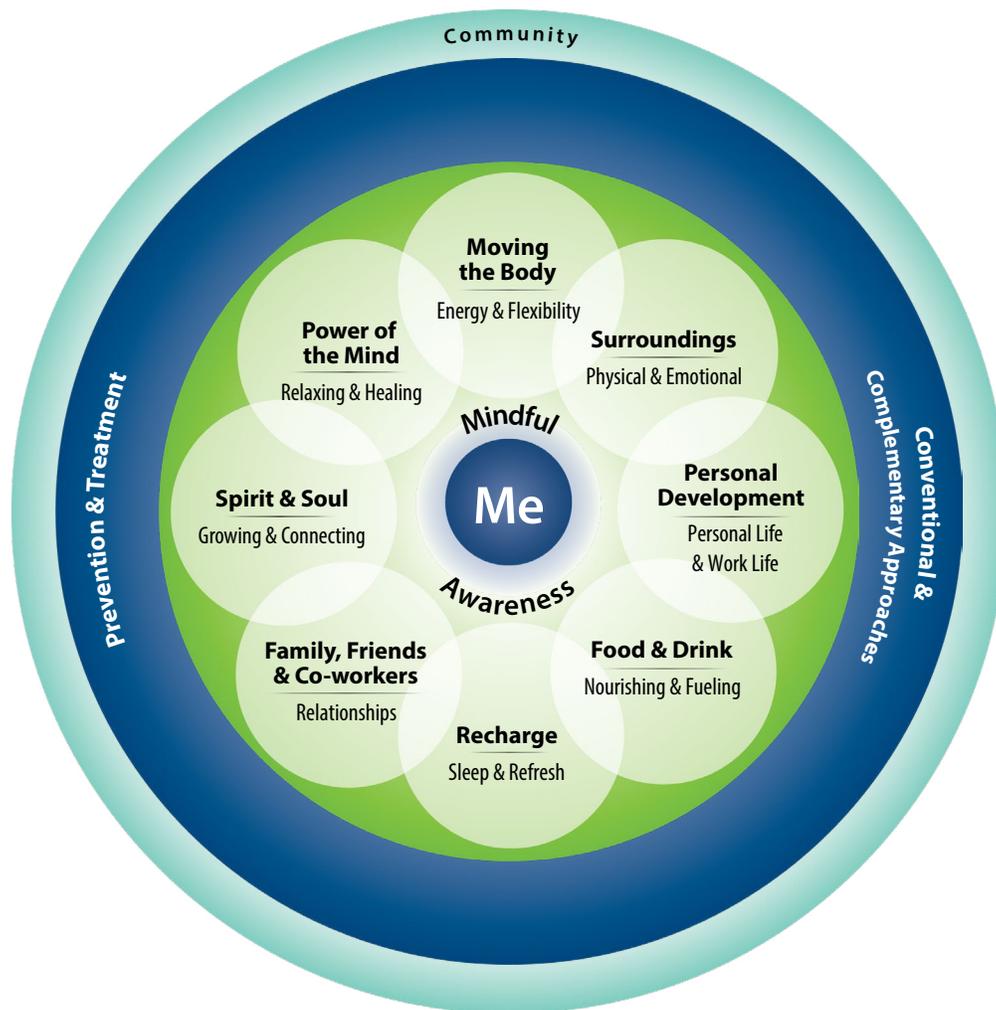


INTRODUCTION

**WHOLE HEALTH AND YOU AS A WHOLE PERSON**

The road to better health rests within you. The first step is to know what you want from your health and why. Knowing your health goals may not be a simple task; yet it is an important step toward reaching your full potential. Living life fully and optimizing health and well-being goes beyond not being sick; it means understanding what matters to you and looking at all aspects in life that contribute to a sense of well-being. This tool will help you explore all areas of your life so your health care team can help you set health goals, not just for your medical needs, but also for your “life” needs and desires.

**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. The inner circle, “Me,” represents you, your values and what really matters to you.

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 ring 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 outer ring represents the people and groups with whom you are connected. There is more information about the areas of the circle 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.



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

For each area below, consider where you are now and where you would like to be. All the areas are important. In the “Where you are” box, briefly write the reasons you chose the number you do. 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.

<b>Moving the Body: Our physical, mental, and emotional health are impacted by the amount and kind of movement we do. Moving the body can take many forms such as dancing, walking, gardening, yoga, and exercise.</b>	
Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) 1            2            3            4            5	Where would you like to be? 1            2            3            4            5
What are the reasons you choose this number?	What changes could you make to help you get there?

<b>Recharge: Our bodies and minds must rest and recharge in order to optimize our health. Getting a good night’s rest, as well as recharging our mental and physical energy throughout the day, are vital to well-being. Taking short breaks or doing something you enjoy or feels good for moments throughout the day are examples of ways to refresh.</b>	
Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) 1            2            3            4            5	Where would you like to be? 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. Energy, mood, weight, how long we live, and overall health are all impacted by what and how we choose to eat and drink.

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

**Personal Development:** Our health is impacted by how we choose to spend our time. Aligning our work and personal activities with what really matters to us, or what brings us joy, can have a big effect on our health and outlook on life.

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

**Family, Friends, and Co-workers:** Our relationships, including those with pets, are as important to our health and well-being as any other factor. Spending more time in relationships that ‘fuel’ us and less in relationships that ‘drain’ us is one potential option. Improving our relationship skills or creating new relationships through community activities are other options to consider.

Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) 1            2            3            4            5	Where would you like to be? 1            2            3            4            5
What are the reasons you choose this number?	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. Connecting and aligning spiritually is very individual and may take the form of religious affiliation, connection to nature, or engaging in things like music or art.

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

**Surroundings:** Our surroundings, both at work and where we live, indoors and out, can affect our health and outlook on life. Changes within our control such as organizing, decluttering, or adding a plant or artwork can improve mood and health.

Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) 1            2            3            4            5	Where would you like to be? 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. Breathing techniques, guided imagery, tai chi, yoga, or gratitude can buffer the impact of stress and other emotions.

Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) 1            2            3            4            5	Where would you like to be? 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 a flu shot, 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, 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.

## REFLECTIONS

1. Now that you have thought about all of these areas, what is your vision of your best possible health? What would your life look like? What kind of activities would you be doing?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Are there any areas you would like to work on? Where might you start?

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **ME**

The innermost circle represents each of us 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 this knowledge needs to be what drives my choices and my health care. I am the most important person when it comes to making choices that influence my health and well-being. I am the leader of my team, and my health care team professionals are some of the invited players.”

### **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 plan 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.

For example, when you miss the whispers of an 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. Mindful awareness connects you to each component of your well-being, and to your whole self.

### **THE EIGHT AREAS OF SELF CARE**

Self-care is often the most 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. 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. They 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”*

Exercise gives you energy and strength. Movement can make you more flexible. Exercise is also good for your mind. Regular exercise can lower blood pressure and cholesterol and reduce the risk for heart disease. Examples of exercise and movement include walking, gardening, dancing, or lifting weights. It's important to find what works for you.

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

Your environment can affect your health. You may have problems with safety, or things like clutter, noise, bad smells, poor lighting or water quality. You may be able to change some of these problems. 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. It's good to have a safe, comfortable, and healthy space.

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

No matter where you are in life, your personal and work life are very important. 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 you eat and drink can nourish your body and mind and have a tremendous effect on your health and well-being. Choose healthy eating habits that fit your lifestyle. Certain supplements can support your health goals. Limit alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine. Keep your body and mind properly fueled.

**Recharge** *“Sleep and Refresh”*

Sleep is very important for your body and mind. Rest can give you peace. Relaxation can lower stress. Activities you enjoy can help you feel recharged. A good balance between activity and rest improves your health and well-being.

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

Feeling alone can sometimes make you get sick or keep you sick. Positive social relationships are healthy. A healthy intimate relationship with a life partner 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”*

A sense of meaning and purpose in life is important to many people. 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”*

Your mind can affect your body. Sometimes when you think about stressful things, your heart rate and blood pressure go up. 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. Warriors 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**

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 health and well-being.

**COMMUNITY**

The outer ring 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; who rely on you and upon whom you rely.



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