



U.S. Department of
Veterans Affairs

Whole Health Partner Training

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF PATIENT CENTERED CARE & CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION



Prepared Under Contract to the VHA
by Pacific Institute for Research & Evaluation

October 1, 2018

PARTICIPANT MANUAL

WHOLE HEALTH PARTNER TRAINING - AGENDA

DAY 1 - TUESDAY

Times			Module	Topic / Title
7:30 AM	-	8:00 AM		Participant Registration and Sign In
8:00 AM	-	8:25 AM		Welcome and Overview of the Course
8:25 AM	-	8:55 AM	1	Participant Introductions
8:55 AM	-	9:05 AM	2	Community Agreements
9:05 AM	-	9:25 AM	3	What is a Whole Health (WH) Partner?
9:25 AM	-	9:55 AM	4	What is the WH Pathway in the Context of the WH System?
9:55 AM	-	10:10 AM		Break
10:10 AM	-	10:40 AM	5	Mindful Awareness Review and Practice
10:40 AM	-	11:30 AM	6	Learning How to Introduce a Veteran to the WH System
11:30 AM	-	12:30 PM		Lunch
12:30 PM	-	2:00 PM	7	Identifying Stakeholders and Recruitment Strategies
2:00 PM	-	2:25 PM		Movement Break / Break
2:25 PM	-	3:35 PM	8	Engaging Veterans in the Use of the PHI
3:35 PM	-	3:50 PM	9	Resources Available to Veterans (Part 1) & Passport
3:50 PM	-	4:00 PM		Day 1 Q & A and Feedback (Pulse Checks)
4:00 PM				Adjourn

DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY

Times		Module	Topic / Title
7:30 AM	-	8:00 AM	Participant Registration and Sign In
8:00 AM	-	8:30 AM	Overview of the Day and Mindful Awareness
8:30 AM	-	9:15 AM	Resources Discussion (continued)
9:15 AM	-	10:00 AM	10 Developing Your Elevator Talk with Demo
10:00 AM	-	10:15 AM	Break
10:15 AM	-	11:00 AM	11 Becoming More Familiar with Veteran Resources – Site Presentations
11:00 AM	-	12:00 PM	12 Following Up with Veterans on their PHP
12:00 PM	-	1:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM	-	1:30 PM	13 Limits of the Partner Role
1:30 PM	-	1:45 PM	14 Documenting Veteran Contacts / Interactions
1:45 PM	-	2:30 PM	15 Practice of Informal WH Introductions
2:30 PM	-	2:45 PM	Break
2:45 PM	-	2:55 PM	16 2 nd Draft of Elevator Talk
2:55 PM	-	3:35 PM	17 Strategy Planning for Implementing Partner Program
3:35 PM	-	3:45 PM	18 Closing Circle
3:45 PM	-	4:00 PM	Final Feedback and Evaluation
4:00 PM			Adjourn

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WELCOME

Welcome to the Whole Health (WH) Partner course. This course is a new, innovative offering to support the VA in moving toward Whole Health. Whole Health is a comprehensive approach to health care that

1. Starts with ‘what matters’ to the Veteran
2. Considers all aspects of the Veteran’s health
3. Engages Veterans in being more proactive in their own health and
4. Supports Veterans in identifying and achieving their goals for their life and health.

WH Partners trained in this course will be critical in initiating and assisting Veterans in their Whole Health Journeys. WH Partners are the key personnel to assist Veterans through the Pathway elements of the Whole Health System. WH Partners support VA clinical staff and providers as part of a comprehensive team to maximize the Veterans’ realization of their greatest health possible.

The objectives of this course are:

1. Learn about Whole Health and the Whole Health System
2. Learn the Partner’s critical role in the Pathway element of the System.
3. Continue to cultivate and practice mindfulness
4. Learn and practice introducing Veterans to WH informally
5. Learn and practice developing and delivering WH Introductions and Presentations (formally)
6. Develop and evaluate recruitment strategies for Partner’s local site
7. Learn to engage Veterans in the use of the PHI
8. Identify and learn resources that are available to Veterans both locally and nationally
9. Develop and practice an ‘Elevator Talk’ on WH
10. Learn strategies to support Veterans on their WH Journeys and Personalized Health Plans (PHP)
11. Learn the limits of the WH Partner role and the procedures for referring a Veteran for additional help and support

Thank you for your interest and participation in this critical role of supporting fellow-Veterans on their WH Journey.

WHAT DO WHOLE HEALTH PARTNERS DO?

- P**romote the utilization of WH Pathways for fellow Veterans
- A**ccompany/welcome Veterans to the Whole Health Journey
- R**ecruit Veterans to engage in the WH Pathway/Well-being offerings
- T**rain/facilitate the *Taking Charge of My Life and Health Course*
- N**avigate Veterans through the WH Journey
- E**ncourage fellow Veterans as they engage in their WH Journey
- R**ole Model by participating in their own WH Journey
- S**upport fellow-Veterans as they engage in their WH Journey

ABOUT THE COURSE

Whole Health Partner Training is a two-day course designed to train Whole Health Partners in several roles in order to promote and support fellow Veterans in effective utilization of the Whole Health (WH) Pathway. The WH Pathway allows Veterans to learn about Whole Health, and engage in furthering their health and well-being based on their own mission, aspiration or purpose (MAP). Whole Health Partners are Veterans and may include volunteers, Peer Support Specialists, and community Veterans interested in supporting other Veterans in their WH Journey.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS PROGRAM?

For Whole Health Partners being trained:

- Whole Health Partners are given the opportunity to support fellow-Veterans in their WH Journeys
- Whole Health Partners are provided opportunities to enhance their own health
- Whole Health Partners learn a variety of roles and skills that may assist them in other areas of their lives

For Veterans supported by Whole Health Partners

- Veterans are given support in developing a plan of action for their lives and health based on what really matters them
- Veterans are supported on their WH Journey and with their Personalized Health Plans
- Veterans have a partner that can help them learn about and navigate the WH offerings at their respective locations

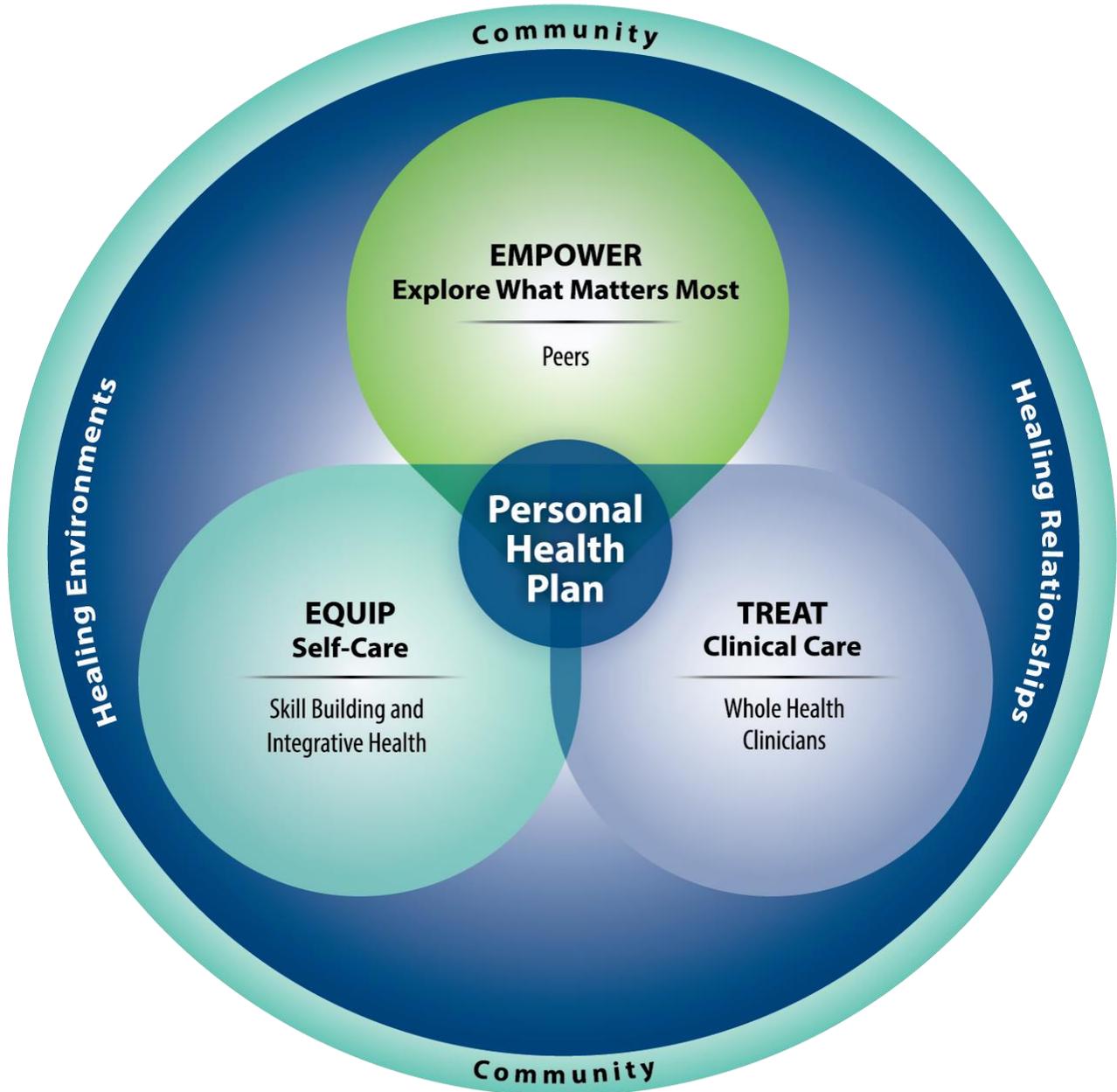
For the VHA Center:

- Clinical staff have additional support to assist Veterans in the utilization of WH Pathways and Well-Being offerings.
- Center can fully implement a Pathways Program at their location

WHOLE HEALTH SYSTEM OVERVIEW

THE WHOLE HEALTH SYSTEM

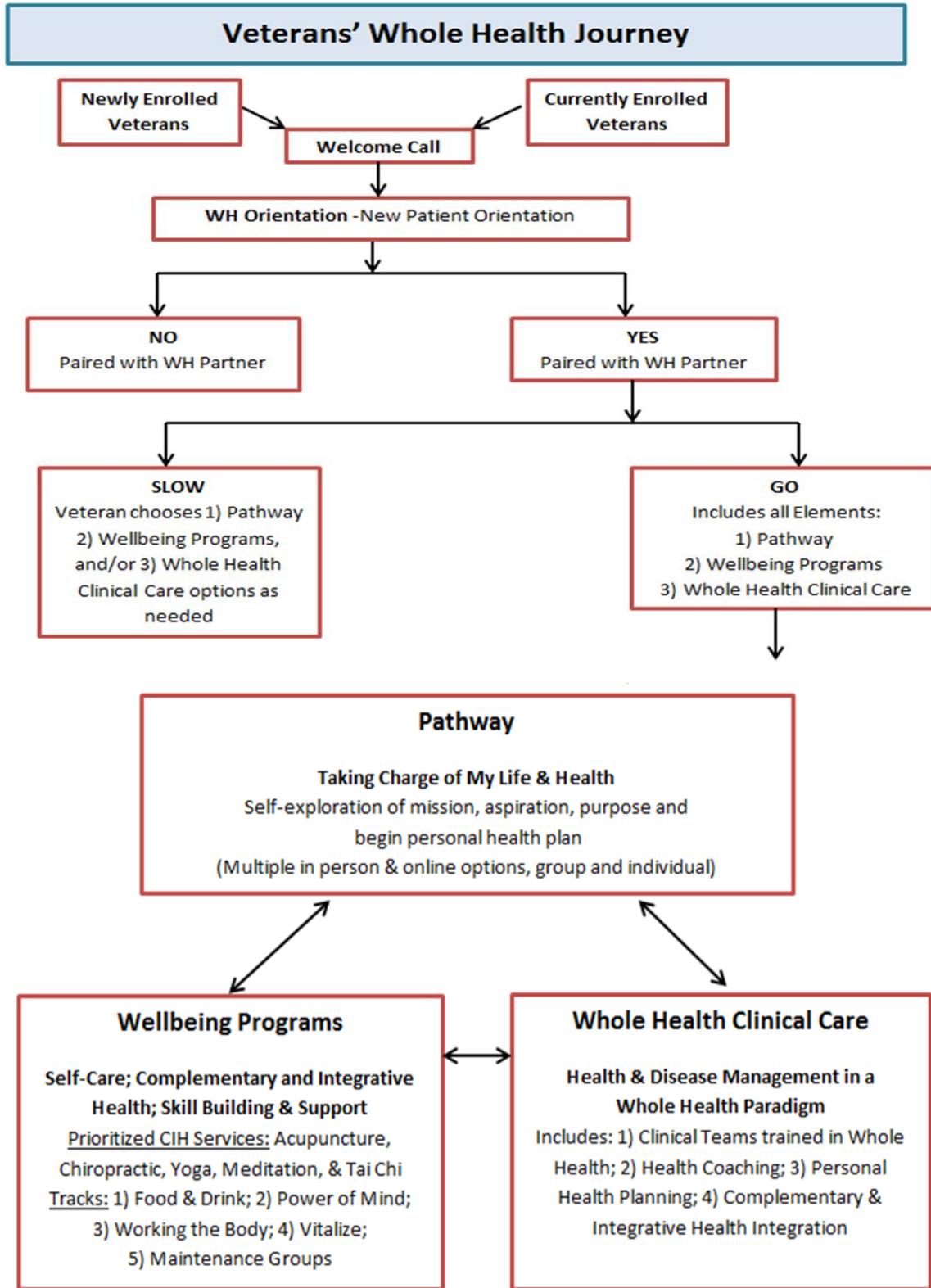
The Whole Health System



The Whole Health System



VETERAN’S WHOLE HEALTH JOURNEY



THE SEVEN ATTITUDES OF MINDFULNESS



(Full Catastrophe Living by Jon Kabat-Zinn)

Beginner’s Mind—*Being curious and not thinking that you already know something.* Asking questions and being excited about how your mind works, asking questions like: Who is seeing? Who is thinking?

Non-judging—*A gentle state of non-judgment, being kind to yourself, and allowing what is.* Trying not to compare, label, or find fault.

Patience—*Let things happen as they need to and in their own time.* Letting go of the idea that you have to “get somewhere, do something, or make something happen.”

Non-striving—*Mindful awareness is about being, not doing,* if it feels like you’re working too hard you probably are. It’s a way of being, being awake to what’s happening in your life rather than what is happening in your mind.

Acceptance—*Seeing things as they are.* It is what it is. Try to be with things as they are. Let go of the stories the mind creates and accept the present moment for what it is.

Letting go—*Not having a set agenda for what “should” happen.* Being open to all possibilities and outcomes.

Trust—*As awareness grows, so does trust in one’s emotions; be yourself in every way.* Have faith in how you move through the world. Trust yourself and what you know.

INTRODUCING VETERANS TO WHOLE HEALTH

Meeting with a Veteran the first time to introduce the Whole Health System/Pathway can be done in an informal setting, one on one, or it might be done in a more formal environment, such as an orientation or group presentation. The following information provides some strategies to use with both an informal introduction or a more formal approach.

INFORMAL INTRODUCTION USING THE ASK – TELL – ASK FORMAT

1. Ask: What is your interest in coming to the VA? *Listen to their response*
2. Tell: Share with them How the VA may be able to help, or offer to get them assistance.
3. Ask: What are your thoughts?

AGAIN, USING THE ASK – TELL - ASK FORMAT:

1. Ask: Would you like to hear about some new offerings in the VA that may be of interest to you?
2. Tell: Using visual aids, if available, briefly tell them about Whole Health, using your own words (elevator Speech). If time permits, or appropriate, this may be a place to briefly share your experience with WH.
3. Ask: Are you interested in learning more about what I have just shared. Possible Responses: “Yes, No, maybe”

IF THEIR RESPONSE IS ‘NO’ . . .

Thank them for listening.

Ask if they would be interested in you contacting them at a later date about Whole Health.

Let them know that they can always contact you (or a WH represented) again at a later date.

Offer a brochure or card.

IF THEIR RESPONSE IS “MAYBE” . . .

Ask what specifically they might be interested in.

Offer them further information regarding online information, or any additional offerings at the location.

Ask if you could follow up with them, or offer to be available if they have further questions.

IF THEIR RESPONSE IS “YES” . . .

Find out how they want to start:

- More information
- A specific class
- Health Coaching, TCMLH group, or an online offering

PREPARING A FORMAL WHOLE HEALTH INTRODUCTION

Before giving a formal WH Introduction, it will be helpful to consider the following:

- Determine who the audience is and tailor your presentation to them.
- Determine the length of the presentation.
- Choose material from WH Introduction (found in this manual)
- Include handout materials available to you.
- If possible, include an experiential activity.
- If relevant, include your personal story.
- Practice your presentation before presenting.
- Try to use your own words as much as possible.
- Make sure to include time for questions and discussion.
- Offer your presentation to as many audiences as possible (VA, Community Settings, VA Staff)

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES: NETWORKING

KEY STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS TO CULTIVATE

CHAPLAIN SERVICE – Ensure that Veteran patients (both inpatient and outpatient) receive appropriate clinical pastoral care as desired or requested by the Veteran; Members of Patient Care Team and provide supportive spiritual care, assistance with decision making and communication, communication with caregivers and referral and linkage to internal and external resources

COMPLEMENTARY & INTEGRATIVE HEALTH (CIH) PRACTITIONERS – Staff/volunteers who provide evidence-based integrative approaches e.g. Tai Chi, Massage, Yoga, Meditation. Reference VHA Directive 1137 [List of Approved Approaches](#)

ELIGIBILITY STAFF – Assists Veterans with determining eligibility for health services and status of co-pays

HEALTH BEHAVIOR COORDINATOR – Train and consult with clinicians regarding health coaching and Motivational Interviewing; support PACT with teambuilding, disease prevention guidance, employee wellness, and related services

HEALTH PROMOTION DISEASE PREVENTION (HPDP) PROGRAM MANAGER – Provide effective interventions for promoting healthy behaviors and offers programs such as MOVE and smoking cessation

PACT AND MENTAL HEALTH LIAISONS – Whole health Partner should identify liaisons within these departments and others to best assist Veterans with navigating the Whole Health System

PATIENT ADVOCATE/VETERAN EXPERIENCE OFFICER – Assist Veteran/families with concerns, problems and advocates on their behalf

PRIMARY CARE/MENTAL HEALTH INTEGRATION (PCMHI) TEAM – Integrates mental health staff into each PACT, allowing your care team to provide services for depression, anxiety, PTSD, and substance use without needing a separate consult with mental health providers outside of the PACT clinic area

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST/OFFICER – Focused on creative and innovative ways to connect with Veterans, the media and other stakeholders and can assist with marketing and social media

RECREATION THERAPIST/CREATIVE ARTS THERAPIST – Interdisciplinary service, with a mission of improving and enriching bio-psycho-social functioning through active therapy and/or meaningful therapeutic activities to maintain or improve functional independence and life quality

TRANSITION & CARE MANAGEMENT TEAM/TRANSITION PATIENT ADVOCATE (TPA) – Assist recently separated Service members with health care and navigating the VA system

VETERAN SERVICE OFFICERS (VSO) – Provides guidance on VA Benefits and assist Veteran/families with applying for Service-Connected compensation, NSC Pension, education benefits, etc.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE MANAGER – Coordinates corps of volunteers, helps to support provision of service by registering and assigning volunteers to programs. Roles range from traditional ones, such as escorting patients and administrative duties, to creative activities, such as teaching arts and crafts and developing newsletters

WHOLE HEALTH COACH – Veterans work with coaches to develop a personal health mission, develop specific goals and action steps, and then adjust their plan as needed. Coaches provide guidance and support throughout the process

OTHER KEY STAFF

OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES / STAKEHOLDERS

RECRUITING VETERANS TO WHOLE HEALTH

IDEAS FOR RECRUITING STRATEGIES

Set up tables or displays in lobby of VA or community facility.

Be available as Ambassadors in the VA

New Veteran Orientation Presentations

New Employee Orientations??

Meet with Veteran groups informally

Make brochures, posters and other materials available in appropriate places (waiting rooms, offices, etc)

Present to VA staff members at meetings or lunch gatherings

Provide an opportunity for VA staff to experience the Personalized Health Planning Process

Participate in Health Fairs

Offer to do presentations at Veteran’s Community Groups (VSO’s)

Sponsor drop-in Tai-chi, Yoga, Mindfulness classes etc.

Online Recruiting??

Other Strategies

Other: _____

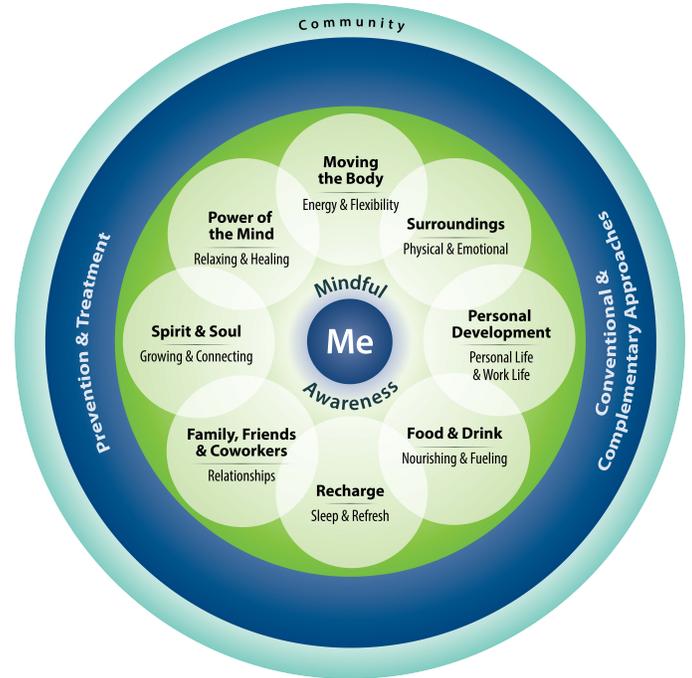
Other: _____

Other: _____

Personal Health Inventory

Use this circle to help you think about your whole health.

- All areas are important and connected.
- The body and mind have strong healing abilities.
- Improving one area can help other areas.
- The inner ring represents your mission, aspirations, or purpose. Your care focuses on you as a unique person.
- Mindful awareness is being tuned in and present.
- Your self-care and everyday choices make up the green circle.
- The next ring is professional care (tests, medications, supplements, surgeries, examinations, treatments, and counseling). This section includes complementary approaches like acupuncture and yoga.
- The outer ring includes the people and groups who make up your community.



Rate where you feel you are on the scales below from 1-5, with 1 being miserable and 5 being great.

Physical Well-Being				
1 Miserable	2	3	4	5 Great
Mental/Emotional Well-Being				
1 Miserable	2	3	4	5 Great
Life: How is it to live your day-to-day life?				
1 Miserable	2	3	4	5 Great

What is your mission, aspiration, or purpose? What do you live for? What matters most to you?

Write a few words to capture your thoughts:



Where You Are and Where You Would Like to Be

For each area below, consider “Where you are” and “Where you want to be”. Write in a number between 1 (low) and 5 (high) that best represents where you are and where you want to be. You do not need to be a “5” in any of the areas now, nor even wish to be a “5” in the future.

Areas of Whole Health	Where I am Now (1-5)	Where I Want to Be (1-5)
Moving the Body: “Energy and Flexibility” Moving and doing physical activities like wheeling, walking, dancing, gardening, sports, lifting weights, yoga, cycling, swimming, and working out in a gym.		
Recharge: “Sleep and Refresh” Getting enough rest, relaxation, and sleep.		
Food and Drink: “Nourish and Fuel” Eating healthy, balanced meals with plenty of fruits and vegetables each day. Drinking enough water and limiting sodas, sweetened drinks, and alcohol.		
Personal Development: “Personal life and Work life” Learning and growing. Developing abilities and talents. Balancing responsibilities where you live, volunteer, and work.		
Family, Friends, and Co-Workers: “Relationships” Feeling listened to and connected to people you love and care about. The quality of your communication with family, friends and people you work with.		
Spirit and Soul: “Growing and Connecting” Having a sense of purpose and meaning in your life. Feeling connected to something larger than yourself. Finding strength in difficult times.		
Surroundings: “Physical and Emotional” Feeling safe. Having comfortable, healthy spaces where you work and live. The quality of the lighting, color, air, and water. Decreasing unpleasant clutter, noises, and smells.		
Power of the Mind: “Relaxing and Healing” Tapping into the power of your mind to heal and cope. Using mind-body techniques like relaxation, breathing, or guided imagery.		
Professional Care: “Prevention and Clinical Care” Staying up to date on prevention and understanding your health concerns, care options, treatment plan, and their role in your health.		

Reflections

Now that you have thought about what matters to you in all of these areas, what is your vision of your best possible self? What would your life look like? What kind of activities would you be doing?

Are there any areas you would like to work on? Where might you start?

After completing the Personal Health Inventory, talk to a friend, a family member, your health coach, a peer, or someone on your healthcare team about areas you would like to explore further.

QUESTIONS TO ASK REGARDING THE SHORT VERSION OF THE PHI

1. What stands out for you now that you've completed this?
2. What really matters to you in your life?
3. In the areas of WH, what's an area you're happy with?
4. What score did you give yourself and what does that mean to you?
5. Where would you like to be?
6. What's an area (or areas, depending on time) you might like to enhance or improve?
7. What score did you give yourself and what does that mean to you?
8. Where would you like to be?
9. Would you like to set a goal for yourself around this area? If yes, what might that goal be?
10. How could you get started on this?
11. What support might you need to help get started and be successful?
12. How can I support you?

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO VETERANS

GENERAL WHOLE HEALTH RESOURCES

VIDEOS

Clinical Champions: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYKHwgjJ_Iw

Dr. Tracy Gaudet: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAL5ZL_GqUc

Dr. Dave Rakel & Dr. Adam Rindfleisch: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AP6z5kfN6MU>

What is Mindfulness? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbGe9BpniJo>

Why Mindfulness for the VA? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Ui79W7TPdo>

Four Ways to Cultivate Mindfulness <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sU-xRVB7rVE>

Beginning a Mindfulness Practice <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zr42pt0kuZE>

Mindfulness and Compassion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgJbYzI2Sjk>

Star Well-Kit: <http://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/education/STAR/>

To learn more about the positive impact of patient centered care, and to learn more about the Veterans who were empowered to improve their health and well-being, view the videos found on the link below. Or just listen and download audio files (MP3 format) which provide guided meditation and mindfulness strategies. These audio tracks can be used in group settings as well as for individual use.

<http://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/resources/multimedia/index.asp>

Core Patient Centered Care Videos

The "Components of Health and Well-Being" Video Series

The "Practicing What Matters Most Series" Video Series

The "Health For Life" Video Series

Instructional Videos

Whole Health Videos

Downloadable Audio Files & Podcasts

HANDOUTS

- Health Coaching Brochure
- TCMLH Brochure
- Wallet Cards
- Long and Short Version of PHI
- Magnets

- Whole Health Introductions offered locally

RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET / VA INTRANET

VA Patient Centered Care (External—OPCC&CT resources for Veterans & family members)

<http://www.va.gov/patientcenteredcare/>

OPCC&CT SharePoint Hub (Internal—OPCC&CT SharePoint)

<https://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/OPCC/Pages/Default.aspx>

- Education Hub:
<https://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/OPCC/Education/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Whole Health Library

<http://projects.hsl.wisc.edu/SERVICE>

Integrative Health Coordinating Center (IHCC)

- **IHCC Email**
vhaopcctintegrativehealth@va.gov
- **IHCC SharePoint Page**
<http://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/OPCC/sitePages/IHCC-home.aspx>

FIT SharePoint Page

<http://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/OPCC/SitePages/FIT-programs.aspx>

- **FIT CIH Specialty Team Email (FIT CIH engagements available)**
VHAOPCCCTCIHSpecialtyTeam@va.gov

RESOURCES FOR EACH COMPONENT OF HEALTH

FOOD AND DRINK

NOURISHING AND FUELING

What you eat and drink can nourish your body and mind. 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.

Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this area 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
- Tobacco Cessation Programs

VA classes/offerings

Community classes/offerings

Online Material

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.

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

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

VA classes/offerings

Community classes/offerings

Online Material

WORKING YOUR 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.

Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this area 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

VA classes/offerings

Community classes/offerings

Online Material

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.

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

- HUD/VASH (Housing and Urban Development-
- Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing)
- Creative Arts Festival
- VA Home Loans
- Pets

VA classes/offerings

Community classes/offerings

Online Material

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

PERSONAL LIFE AND WORK LIFE

No matter where you are in life, your personal and work life is 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.

Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this area 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)
- Music Therapy
- Art Therapy

VA classes/offerings

Community classes/offerings

Online Material

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.

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

- Meditation
- Guided Imagery
- Progressive Relaxation
- Sleep Hygiene
- Breathing
- Relaxing

VA classes/offerings

Community classes/offerings

Online Material

FAMILY, FRIENDS AND COWORKERS

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.

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

- Peer Support Program
- Marriage and Family Therapy
- Caregiver Support Program
- Care4Giver (Mobile App)
- Veterans Center Counseling

VA classes/offerings

Community classes/offerings

Online Material

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.

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

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

VA classes/offerings

Community classes/offerings

Online Material

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness 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. 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 area include (but are not limited to):

- Mindful awareness is a basic skill in a proactive approach to one's life and health.
- Being fully aware and present without judging is critical to mindful awareness.

VA classes/offerings

Community classes/offerings

Online Material

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN FOLLOWING UP ON VETERANS'S PHP

Following up with a Veteran after they have had an opportunity to complete a Personalized Health Plan (PHP) will be important and could be instrumental in their continuation in the WH System. Consider asking some of the questions that follow:

1. How is it going on your goal (or plan) since we last talked?
2. What have you learned about yourself as a result of attempting this plan?
3. What challenges or barriers did you encounter?
4. How could you overcome these challenges moving forward?
5. How do you want to adapt your goal or action plan?
6. Is there another area of health that you would want to address?
7. If so, what might be your goal and how could you get started?
8. How will continuing to address this area of health support what matters to you?
9. When should I check in with you again?

CREATING MY OWN WHOLE HEALTH ELEVATOR TALK

Characteristics of An Elevator Conversation

- Make it your own, using your own words. . .make it conversational
- Keep it to 30 seconds or less. . .you can always add more if listener expresses interest
- Focus on what you think may appeal to the listener, based on what you know about them
- In developing your ET, it may be helpful to think about what would appeal to you as well
- Keep it short. . . allow the listener to ask question or make comments
- Practice with friends and colleagues

Whole Health Points you may want to include in your ET:

- It's a new approach to health care in the VA
- It starts with what's important to you and what you want your health for
- We have coaches, groups and peers here to help you explore what is your mission, your aspirations or your purpose in life as well as help you carry through on your plan
- It's about 'what matters to you' not 'what's the matter with you'
- It allows you to be in the driver's seat when it comes to your own health
- You get to choose what you want to improve or focus on
- It goes beyond what you might normally think of as 'health'
- It could include anything that impacts your well-being:
 - Food and Drink
 - Working the Body
 - Personal Development
 - Relationships
 - Spirit and Soul
 - Sleep and Refresh
 - Your surroundings
 - The Power of your mind
- We help you in setting goals for yourself in any one of these areas
- We provide the support you need to help you meet your goals
- The VA staff, your doctors and nurses, are here to help you achieve the health you want
- We provide health enhancements, courses and activities that go beyond taking medications
- These include things like acupuncture, tai chi, yoga, massage, and mindfulness
- Does not replace your normal care here at the VA
- We offer classes or support in all these areas of health
- You go at your own pace

Other _____

Other _____

Other _____

YOUR OWN ELEVATOR TALK

Draft 1 Thoughts you want to Include:

Draft 2 Thoughts you want to Include

Partner Project Planning Template

Elements to Consider	Short-Term (1 st 60 Days)	Mid-Range (2-6 Months)	Long-Range (1-2 years from now)
<p>Whole Health Program Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Day to Day Operations/ Scope of Work of Whole Health Partner (percentage of time recruiting, facilitating, networking etc). • Identify reporting mechanism to display the Veterans engaged in Whole Health (avoids duplication of work among WH Partners) • Develop a platform to network internally with other Whole Health colleagues and non-Whole Health colleagues to develop relationships for Veteran Warm Handoffs when needed • Identify key processes and resources needed for Whole Health Partner Program (Veteran resources, community resources, internal resources (e.g. space, referrals, etc)) 			

<p>Elements to Consider</p>	<p>Short-Term (1st 60 Days)</p>	<p>Mid-Range (2-6 Months)</p>	<p>Long-Range (1-2 years from now)</p>
<p>1. Recruiting Veterans to Whole Health Pathway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Process for Recruitment (within VA and outside VA) • Identify opportunities where the current Veteran population would benefit from Whole Health Services • Develop facility specific flow chart for warm handoffs once Veteran engages in next steps with Whole Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Recruitment focus areas within Medical Center (Ex. Waiting Areas, Atrium, Mental Health/Primary Care, Patient Advocate Office) • Develop Goals for the Number of Veterans Introduced to Whole Health, Engaged in Whole Health and Veterans with ongoing Whole Health Encounters • Develop Goal for appropriate timeframe for follow up with Veterans based on number of “Slow, No and Go” Responses <p>Define metrics and process for reporting information on recruitment</p>			

Elements to Consider	Short-Term (1st 60 Days)	Mid-Range (2-6 Months)	Long-Range (1-2 years from now)
<p>Continued Whole Health Education for Whole Health Partners</p> <p>(TCMLH, WH Coaching, Eating for Whole Health, Whole Health for Pain and Suffering, Introduction to Whole Health)</p>			
<p>2. Outreach to VA Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify goal to educate service lines about Whole Health and Role of Whole Health Partner 			
<p>Whole Health Partner National Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Whole Health Facilitator COP • Set a goal to present strong practices nationally on COP. 			
<p>3. Other</p>			

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

THE WHOLE HEALTH INFORMATION SESSION

VHA Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation

Introduction to Whole Health

Purpose: Per the guidance on the Executive Order signed by President Trump on January 9, 2018 a critical part of supporting transitioning Service members will be Whole Health groups led by peers. Together, Veterans explore their **new** mission, and begin to create an overarching personal health plan. This is a part of our Whole Health System, and we are committed to making it a high priority for our new Veterans. The *Introduction to Whole Health* session provides the context for the Whole Health approach on both the National and local levels. Veterans who participate in this *Introduction to Whole Health* session will be prepared to join the *Taking Charge of My Life and Health* peer-led group sessions that will provide a more in-depth immersion into self-exploration, self-care and goal creation around what really matters to the Veteran.

Scope: The *Introduction to Whole Health* session introduces Veterans to personalized, proactive, and patient-driven care that engages and inspires them to their highest possible level of health and well-being. Veterans and family members can attend this introductory session to explore their mission, aspiration, and purpose during this time in their lives. From this Introduction, Veterans can choose to participate in the full program. This is an education and experiential introduction to Whole Health and does not comprise formal counseling.

Facilitators: Veteran peers, preferably with experience in Whole Health concepts and facilitation of peer-led sessions, e.g. Peer Support Specialists, Whole Health Partners, Veteran Volunteers and other staff as needed. Peer facilitators identified may also lead the *Taking Charge of My Life and Health* groups sessions following additional training. The typical number of facilitators for a session would be 1-2 and additional support staff can be made available for larger groups.

Participants: Veterans and family members. Number of participants is dependent on size of room and the number of facilitators/support staff available. These sessions may also be offered to introduce staff to the Whole Health approach.

***The peer facilitator is responsible for ensuring the total number of attendees, the category of attendee and the disposition is recorded for each session. Categories include: recently separated Service member, established Veteran, or family member and the disposition would indicate whether the attendee requested additional services such as referral to mental health and/or to the *Taking Charge of My Life and Health* group program. A template to capture these categories and the attendees' disposition is provided in the OPCC&CT SharePoint folder.**

Location: Non-clinical setting within the VA Medical Center/CBOC/Vet Center/Community Setting, e.g. VSO/YMCA

Format: One group session offered twice monthly on various days/times, including evenings and Saturdays to enhance access to recently separated Veterans and, as needed, provided via videoconference to remote settings. The format described herein is for a two-hour session. Facility leadership may choose to offer refreshments, e.g. coffee/water.

**Once the schedule for offering the sessions is determined by the facility this information will need to be communicated to the VISN.*

Support Staff: Have supportive staff present or quickly available for transitioning Service members, e.g. Mental Health, Chaplains, Social Workers, Health Coaches, Veteran Experience Officers, Patient Advocates, etc. This includes staff that can offer self-care activities offered during the session. **Mental Health staff that can schedule the Veterans into a follow-up appointment, if requested, need to be available at the close of the 2-hour session.**

Crisis Intervention: Each facility requires a clear plan for addressing acute medical/emotional issues should they arise during the session and a warm handoff to mental health staff if requested by the Veteran.

Experiential/Self-Care Component: Incorporate an optional self-care activity offered by experienced staff members, e.g. breathing exercise, relaxation technique, etc. This may be provided by the facilitator, if appropriate, or other staff can be present to lead the activity. During the two-hour session incorporate movement and/or relaxation breaks as needed.

Handouts: Order first eight items from OPCC&CT at no cost [here](#). Some of these items may be viewed in Appendix A.

- OPCC&CT Folder
- Health for Life Pens
- Components of Proactive Health and Well-being Brochures (male/female or co-ed versions)
- Brief PHI
- PHP Wallet Card
- Circle of Health Magnet
- Whole Health: It Starts with Me
- Circle of Health
- Five Signs
- Listing of local referral services/programs related to whole health and crisis management and other helpful information (To be created at the local level – may want to make this resources available via QR Code for ease of Veteran scanning information into phone, e.g. <https://www.the-qr-code-generator.com/>)

Videos: [The Pathway to Whole Health](#) (6 min. 32 sec)

[What Veterans Value: An Introduction to Whole Health](#) (1 min. 44 sec.)

SESSION CONTENT (Facilitator script in italics, not to be read to participants, but used as a guide for the session):

Welcome and Introductions: Facilitator(s) welcome Veterans to the *Introduction to Whole Health* session and introduce themselves followed by a brief description of the session.

This Introduction to Whole Health session is designed to introduce you to the VHA Whole Health approach to care. Our number one goal is that you accomplish the mission you create for yourself. Through our programs and services and, most importantly, your own strengths and abilities, we will work together in healing partnership to optimize your well-being with a focus on what is important to YOU. Transitioning from the Service can pose unique challenges and opportunities and we'll discuss why a whole health approach is helpful in meeting these challenges and capitalizing on your opportunities. We'll also describe areas of self-care and well-being that make up all the different aspects of who we are as individuals. You'll learn about the opportunities offered through our medical center and the community that will help to support you. You will also have the opportunity for safe self-exploration of any areas in your life that you would like to address and begin to develop a plan to move forward with your goal. We'll introduce simple self-care strategies that you may choose to practice at home. So that everyone is comfortable, we ask that you maintain the confidentiality of this session and we ask everyone to respect the safety of this space, however we must let you know that in the event you share thoughts that you may want to hurt yourself or others, or are in a situation where you are being hurt physically or mentally, we have a responsibility to provide assistance and get you some help. We honor and respect the need for your safety, and we will speak with you outside of the group at length because our concern is making sure you are ok

Introduction of Veterans (If appropriate given number of participants)

So that we get to know each other a little better, let's go around and introduce ourselves and, if you'd like, tell us something you want us to know about you or something that brings you a sense of joy.

Introduction to Whole Health:

Video: [The Pathway to Whole Health](#) (6 min. 32 sec.) The facilitator introduces this video by explaining that it illustrates the impact of the Whole Health approach and how Veterans are helping fellow Veterans to rediscover meaning and purpose. Following the video, the facilitator debriefs with the participants to get their thoughts and if they can relate to anything they saw.

What is Whole Health?

*Whole Health recognizes you as a whole person and helps support your unique answer to the question, “What do I want my health for? What is my new mission in life? Whole Health goes beyond illnesses, injuries, or disabilities. It focuses on your values and aspiration, your health and well-being and may include self-care strategies and complementary therapies (such as acupuncture, massage, and yoga), along with your conventional medical care. As a Veteran, you committed your life and health to Mission Success in defense of our country. Now, we want to help you be **mission ready for your life**.*

Why is the VA changing the way health care is provided?

The core mission of the Veterans Health Administration is to “Honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.” “Exceptional care” is different than it used to be. It now includes:

- *getting to know you better*
- *learning what matters most to you*
- *focusing on your goals for your life and health*
- *supporting you in addressing your well-being and self-care*

By engaging in this shift to Whole Health you are not only contributing to your own health and well-being, but to the transformation of healthcare for your fellow Veterans and the Nation.

How is Whole Health different?

Health care usually focuses on preventive care, lowering risk, and illness and disease. Are your cancer screenings and flu shot up to date? Do you feel sick or are you injured? Do you smoke or is your weight healthy? What medications are you on and how are your test results? These things are still important. And Whole Health is more than that. It focuses on what is important to you in your life and how you want to live your life. It includes self-care and things you can do to increase healing and improve your health and well-being. (This would be a good time for the facilitator to share personal story of experience with whole health.)

What is meant by self-care? I don’t have a medical background.

Research shows that the most important ingredient in being healthy is how you take care of yourself, and you don’t need a medical background to do that. Medical care is important, but how you live your life between medical appointments makes the biggest difference. Self-care is not something you have to figure out on your own. In Whole Health care, you have the opportunity to look at all areas of your life, areas of strength and aspects where support could be helpful to you. We call these the Components of Proactive Health and Well-being. You may want to start with just one or two areas. The areas of self-care include:

1. ***Working Your Body***—exercise and movement for energy, flexibility, and strength

2. **Surroundings**—how things around you affect your body and emotions
3. **Personal Development**—learning and growing throughout your lifetime
4. **Food and Drink**—nourishing your body
5. **Recharge**—sleep, rest, relaxation
6. **Family, Friends, and Co-Workers**—your relationships with others
7. **Spirit and Soul**—a sense of connection, purpose, and meaning
8. **Power of the Mind**—tapping into your ability to heal and cope.

We'll go into each of these areas in more depth a little later.

How will Whole Health help me?

Military missions are each unique. Not all maneuvers are handled in the same way. Likewise, there is no one way to help all people to be their healthiest and best. Each person is unique. In a Whole Health approach, health care teams get to know each individual person better and make sure that care is geared to each person's needs and goals. This personalized care is an important part of Whole Health – YOU are at the center of care.

When can I start Whole Health?

Now! You don't need to wait to get started. You can start with a Personal Health Inventory to explore what matters to you and what you want your health for. You can talk to a friend, family member, health coach, spiritual leader, or someone on your health care team about areas you want to work on. We'll have the opportunity to complete the Personal Health Inventory today.

Introduction to the Personal Health Inventory Part 1: The facilitator refers Veterans to the [Brief PHI](#) and reviews the first page:

The Personal Health Inventory (PHI) is a valuable first step toward helping you build a personalized health plan. The PHI is self-assessment tool to help people explore areas of their life. It opens with a question — What really matters to you? — that is at the heart of patient centered care.

The PHI will help you explore these areas in life that affect your health — your sleep, nutrition, relationships, work environment, and more. It will help you assess the eight components of self-care and it will help you pinpoint areas to work on.

The facilitator reviews the front page of the Brief PHI with the participants and then provides time for the participants to complete just the front page of the PHI. This may take 15-20 minutes or more. The facilitator remains present in the room to respond to questions and offer support as needed. It is possible that Veterans will have an emotional reaction while completing the PHI and the facilitator should be vigilant and have a plan to address this situation if it arises. Should a participant choose not to complete the PHI in session they can be invited to remain in the room during this time and complete the PHI at a later time.

Description of Components of Health and Well-being: After the explanation of the Whole Health approach to care and completion of the first page of the Brief PHI, the facilitator will cover each of the Components of Proactive Health and Well-being in more detail prior to leading the participants through completing the second part of the PHI. Participants may be referred to the Circle of Health handout and the facilitator uses the script below with more detailed descriptions of each component as a guide to lead the discussion of each component while trying to generate discussion about areas of strength and areas for growth. The facilitator can inform Veterans about what is available locally as each component is described.

The Components of Proactive Health and Well-Being picture 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, and mental health and well-being. The human body and mind have tremendous healing abilities and together we can help you strengthen these healing abilities. The inner circle represents you, your values and what really matters to you because everything revolves around you and your care. Moving outward, being in a state of mindful awareness helps you see and be present with what really matters to you. The next circle represents your self-care. These are the circumstances and choices you make in your everyday life where you can perhaps take control of your health in relatively easy, reasonable ways. The next ring represents the professional care you can receive. Professional care may include tests, medications, supplements, surgeries, examinations, and counseling. It may also include select complementary approaches such as acupuncture and mind-body therapies, such as yoga and meditation. The outer ring represents the expanding community of people and groups to whom you are connected.

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 life, my health and my healthcare. I am the most important person when it comes to making choices that influence my health and well-being.

The following description of the Components are to be used **as a guide** for the discussion, not read to the group. The facilitator asks the participants to talk about examples of these areas in their own lives; either examples of things they think are strengths or areas they wish to improve or learn more about. Either way is fine, the purpose is to have participants begin to generate ideas about what these domains mean in their lives, to get them motivated to complete their PHI.

Mindfulness: *Mindful awareness is paying attention, on purpose, to what is happening in the present moment without judgment. Everyone has the ability to practice mindful awareness, and you can probably think of a time when you were fully present – paying attention to only what was happening in the moment. Feeling a breeze, hearing a passing car or ticking clock. Mindful awareness can also be noticing what is happening inside us, like noticing a stream of worried*

thoughts about getting ready for a meeting. 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. Mindfulness connects you to each component of your well-being, and to your whole self.

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, how you take care of yourself will have a far 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. 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.

Moving the Body: 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 healthy exercise and movement include walking, gardening, dancing, or lifting weights. It's important to find what works for you

Surroundings: Your environment can affect your health. You may be concerned about your own safety, or struggle with things like clutter, noise, bad smells, poor lighting or water quality. The good news is, with our help you may be able to change some of these problems, and 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 with the simplest measures available. It's important for your health and well-being to have a safe, comfortable, and healthy living space.

Personal Development: No matter where you are in life, your personal and work life is 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. What have you always wanted to learn? What type of work would you like to do?

Food and Drink: What you eat and drink can nourish your body and mind. 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. You may be

wondering about financial constraints involved with buying health food. Eating healthy does not have to be expensive and represents one of the central components of a program of optimal health, and an area we each have some control over.

Recharge: Sleep is very important for your body and mind, we should aim for 7 to 9 hours every night. 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, Coworkers: 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: A sense of meaning and purpose in life is important to almost everyone. 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. What are your gifts, and how might you help others by sharing them? You may express this as a guide to living fully.

Power of the Mind: Mind and body are interconnected, they exist on a continuum such that your mind can affect your body, and vice-versa. 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. A chronic ache or pain can affect your mood. 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 help us heal and cope.

Video: [What Veterans Value: An Introduction to Whole Health](#) (1 min. 44 sec.) The facilitator introduces this brief video by explaining that participants will hear from a fellow Veteran who was dealing with chronic pain and undesirable treatment options until he was introduced to some Whole Health approaches. Debrief the video to get the participants impressions of Mr. Sells' story and how it might relate to them.

Brief PHI – Part 2: The facilitator asks participants to refer to their PHI again to review page two.

This part of the PHI asks us to rate ourselves on where we are and where we'd like to be in each of the areas we just discussed. Some questions you may want to consider as you complete this are:

- *Are you getting enough sleep at night to refresh your body and mind?*
- *Are you eating foods and beverages that will nourish and fuel you?*
- *Are you surrounding yourself with people you love and care about?*
- *Do you have as much energy and flexibility as you could have with more exercise?*
- *Are you finding opportunities to learn and grow?*

At the end of page two are reflection questions. You will be the one making decisions about you. Being mindfully aware and non-judgmental, you will make decisions about where to focus based on what is important to you. Being aware of your life, in all aspects, is the first step to making decisions that are based in your values. We'll take some time now to complete the rest of our PHI.

The Facilitator provides sufficient time for everyone to complete the rest of their PHI and remains present in case there are questions or participants need assistance.

Local Whole Health Programs and Services: The facilitator refers participants to the locally created handout listing Whole Health and other programs and services available in-house and in the community related to well-being and discusses the benefits of each of these and answers any questions.

Review the Five Signs from Change Directions.org with participants: The facilitator reviews the Five Signs handout (Appendix A and below) and encourages participants and family members to be vigilant of any changes as described in the handout and to have a plan should help be needed. Should participants express concern for themselves or others during this discussion a referral to mental health or other support staff may be indicated.

Here are five signs that may mean someone is in emotional pain and might need help:

- ***Their personality changes.*** *You may notice sudden or gradual changes in the way that someone typically behaves. He or she may behave in ways that don't seem to fit the person's values, or the person may just seem different.*
- ***They seem uncharacteristically angry, anxious, agitated, or moody.*** *You may notice the person has more frequent problems controlling his or her temper and seems irritable or unable to calm down. People in more extreme situations of this kind may be unable to sleep or may explode in anger at a minor problem.*

- ***They withdraw or isolate themselves from other people.*** *Someone who used to be socially engaged may pull away from family and friends and stop taking part in activities he or she used to enjoy. In more severe cases the person may start failing to make it to work or school. Not to be confused with the behavior of someone who is more introverted, this sign is marked by a change in someone's typical sociability, as when someone pulls away from the social support he or she typically has.*
- ***They stop taking care of themselves and may engage in risky behavior.*** *You may notice a change in the person's level of personal care or an act of poor judgment on his or her part. For instance, someone may let his or her personal hygiene deteriorate, or the person may start abusing alcohol or illicit substances or engaging in other self-destructive behavior that may alienate loved ones.*
- ***They seem overcome with hopelessness and overwhelmed by their circumstances.*** *Have you noticed someone who used to be optimistic and now can't find anything to be hopeful about? That person may be suffering from extreme or prolonged grief, or feelings of worthlessness or guilt. People in this situation may say that the world would be better off without them, suggesting suicidal thinking.*

PHP Wallet Card/Goals: The facilitator refers participants to the PHP Wallet Card (if available) and invites them to fill out the front of the card and as much as they wish on the back of the card with emphasis on the Overall Life and Health Goals and Changes I am Making sections. The facilitator explains that this card can be kept with them as they go to the appointments so that all members of their health care team can help to support these goals – where ever they go for care.

Recapping getting involved in Whole Health: The facilitator asks participants how they might use what they experienced today to more actively engage in their own well-being. Some suggestions that can be discussed include:

Help your health care team get to know you better. Tell them what really matters to you in your life: what makes you happy, and what you want your health for. Your health care team is who you decide it is! It may be made up of your primary care team, mental health providers, health coaches, integrative health practitioners, peers, community members – anyone who might support you as you work toward your goals.

Talk to your health care team about your self-care. In what areas are you doing well? What are your natural strengths? What areas are challenges for you? Are there one or two areas on which you would like to focus?

Work with your health care team on a plan for your health. You are the expert on yourself—what you can do or cannot do, what you are willing to do, how you feel, how you want to live your life, what you want to accomplish. Your health care team can help you think through ways to improve your health that work for you. They can offer suggestions to improve your self-care. They can

recommend strategies that fit your interests and lifestyle and the resources available in your area. They can help you set goals and identify steps along the way to reach those goals. Making changes in even one area can improve your health and help you reach your true potential.

Closing: The facilitator expresses gratitude for the Veterans’ service and emphasizes that a grateful Nation and a grateful group of practitioners in the VA are ready to serve those who have served so well. Participants should be encouraged to join the more in-depth peer-led group *Taking Charge of My Life and Health* that is (or will be) offered by the medical center. In these group meetings, Veterans have time and support to reflect on what really matters to them and what they want their health for and are provided support to address their health and well-being. *Taking Charge of My Life and Health* is not a therapy or counseling group and it is open for all Veterans to join who want to enhance their well-being and help support other Veterans.

Additional next steps may include a referral to a program within VHA or the community and follow-up with designated staff, e.g. Peer Support Specialist, Health Coach, Social Worker, Chaplain, etc. Staff from Mental Health are to be available for a brief time following the *Introduction to Whole Health* session to meet with participants if requested and provide guidance on next steps. The facilitator asks if there are any questions, thanks the Veterans for taking the time to participate and encourages them to partner with the VA to create their plan to be mission ready for life.

Appendix A: Handouts

WHOLE HEALTH: IT STARTS WITH ME

Whole Health is an approach to health care that empowers and enables YOU to take charge of your health and well-being and live your life to the fullest. Whole Health starts with YOU. It is fueled by the power of knowing yourself and what will really work for you in your life. Only you have these insights, this knowledge. This information was gathered to help you as you make choices to support your health. As you learn more, you will have even more power to take care of yourself. Best wishes!

What is Whole Health?

Whole Health recognizes you as a whole person. Whole Health goes beyond your illnesses, injuries, or disabilities. It focuses on health and well-being and includes self-care and complementary therapies (such as acupuncture, massage, and yoga), along with your medical care. In Whole Health care, you are a more active partner with your health care team.

Why is the VA changing the way health care is provided?

The core mission of Veterans Health Administration is to “Honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.” “Exceptional care” is different than it used to be. It now includes:

- getting to know you better
- learning what matters most to you
- focusing on your goals for your life and health
- helping you with self-care.

How is Whole Health different?

Health care usually focuses on preventive care, lowering risk, and illness and disease. Are your cancer screenings and flu shot up to date? Do you feel sick or are you injured? Do you smoke or is your weight healthy? What medications are you on and how are your test results? These things are still important. And Whole Health is more than that. It focuses on what is important to you in your life and how you want to live your life. It includes selfcare and things you can do to increase healing and improve your health and well-being. You and your health care team work together to help you do what you want to do. Together, you discuss what you are doing well and what type of support from others may help you be healthy.

What is meant by self-care? I don't have a medical background.

Research shows that the most important ingredient in being healthy is how you take care of yourself, and you don't need a medical background to do that. Medical care is important, but how you live your life between medical appointments makes the most difference. Selfcare is not something you have to figure out on your own. In Whole Health care, you look at all areas of your life. You may want to start with just one or two areas. The areas of selfcare include:

- **Working Your Body**—exercise and movement for energy, flexibility, and strength
- **Surroundings**—how things around you affect your body and emotions
- **Personal Development**—learning and growing throughout your lifetime
- **Food and Drink**—nourishing your body
- **Recharge**—sleep, rest, relaxation
- **Family, Friends, and Co-Workers**—your relationships with others
- **Spirit and Soul**—a sense of connection, purpose, and meaning
- **Power of the Mind**—tapping into your ability to heal and cope.

Will I continue to see my primary care provider?

Yes. If you receive your health care from the VA, you will continue to see your provider and health care team of nurses, social workers, dietitians, chaplains, pharmacists, and mental health professionals. You may notice them asking about what matters to you in your life so they can help you with your life goals. You may also receive more self-care support and be referred to complementary services like health coaching, yoga, acupuncture, and massage therapy if available in your VA medical center or community.

How will Whole Health help me?

Military missions are each unique. Not all maneuvers are handled in the same way. Likewise, there is no one way to help all people to be their healthiest and best. Each person is unique. In a Whole Health approach, health care teams get to know each individual person better and make sure that care is geared to each person's needs and goals. This personalized care is an important part of Whole Health.

Is there a downside to Whole Health care compared to the type of care I have received in the past?

There is not a downside to Whole Health compared to the way you received care in the past. Some questions may be new for you. You can choose what you share and how detailed your answers will be. It is likely that you will be very happy with Whole Health care, because your health care team will focus on you as an individual. People are more likely to follow a plan that they helped create and that is based on their own life.

What can I do if I feel unsure about the Whole Health approach?

If you are uncertain or uncomfortable at any time with a Whole Health approach, talk with someone on your health care team. Ask questions, share your concerns, get more information. Let your health care team know what would be helpful to you.

How do I get started with Whole Health?

Step #1: Help your health care team get to know you better. Tell them what really matters to you in your life: what makes you happy, and what you want your health for.

Step #2: Talk to your health care team about your self-care. In what areas are you doing well? What are your natural strengths? What areas are challenges for you? Are there one or two areas on which you would like to focus?

Step #3: Work with your health care team on a plan for your health. You are the expert on yourself—what you can do or cannot do, how you feel, how you want to live your life, what you want to accomplish. Your health care team can help you think through ways to improve your health that work for you. They can offer suggestions to improve your self-care.

They can recommend strategies that fit your interests and lifestyle and the resources available in your area. They can help you set goals and identify steps along the way to reach those goals. Making changes in even one area can improve your health. Your team will support you as you work toward your goals and help you find other experts to help, if needed. They will also work with you to revise your plan over time as you accomplish goals or need to change them.

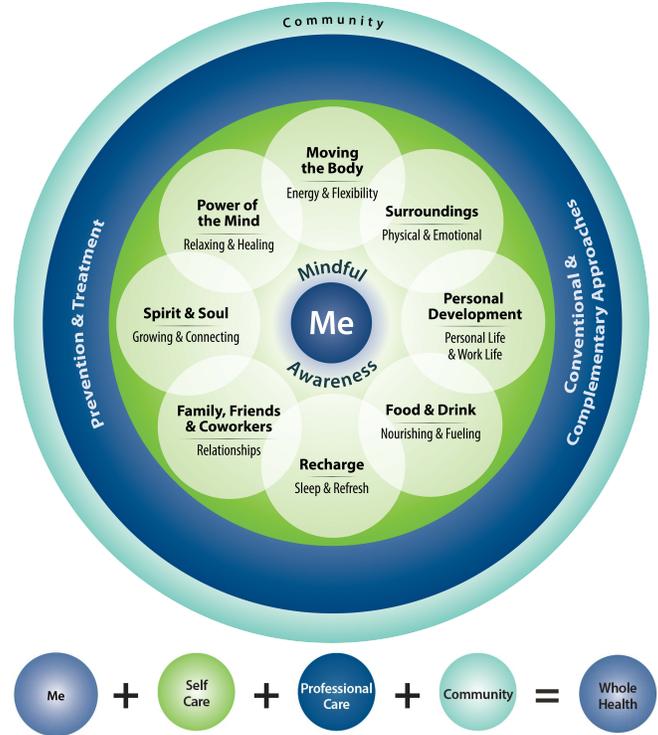
When can I start Whole Health?

You don't need to wait to get started. You can complete a [Personal Health Inventory](#) to explore what matters to you and what you want your health for. You can talk to a friend, family member, health coach, spiritual leader, or someone on your health care team about areas you want to work on. Your health care team is ready to start the Whole Health process with you now or at your next appointment. Share your interest in Whole Health with someone on your health care team today! The information in this handout is general. Please work with your health care team to use the information in the best way possible to promote your health and happiness.

Personal Health Inventory

Use this circle to help you think about your whole health.

- All areas are important and connected.
- The body and mind have strong healing abilities.
- Improving one area can help other areas.
- The inner ring represents your mission, aspirations, or purpose. Your care focuses on you as a unique person.
- Mindful awareness is being tuned in and present.
- Your self-care and everyday choices make up the green circle.
- The next ring is professional care (tests, medications, supplements, surgeries, examinations, treatments, and counseling). This section includes complementary approaches like acupuncture and yoga.
- The outer ring includes the people and groups who make up your community.



Rate where you feel you are on the scales below from 1-5, with 1 being miserable and 5 being great.

Physical Well-Being				
1 Miserable	2	3	4	5 Great
Mental/Emotional Well-Being				
1 Miserable	2	3	4	5 Great
Life: How is it to live your day-to-day life?				
1 Miserable	2	3	4	5 Great

What is your mission, aspiration, or purpose? What do you live for? What matters most to you?

Write a few words to capture your thoughts:



Where You Are and Where You Would Like to Be

For each area below, consider “Where you are” and “Where you want to be”. Write in a number between 1 (low) and 5 (high) that best represents where you are and where you want to be. The goal is not to be perfect in all areas. You do not need to be a “5” in any of the areas now, nor even wish to be a “5” in the future.

Areas of Whole Health	Where I am Now (1-5)	Where I Want to Be (1-5)
Moving the Body: “Energy and Flexibility” Moving and doing physical activities like wheeling, walking, dancing, gardening, sports, lifting weights, yoga, cycling, swimming, and working out in a gym.		
Recharge: “Sleep and Refresh” Getting enough rest, relaxation, and sleep.		
Food and Drink: “Nourish and Fuel” Eating healthy, balanced meals with plenty of fruits and vegetables each day. Drinking enough water and limiting sodas, sweetened drinks, and alcohol.		
Personal Development: “Personal life and Work life” Learning and growing. Developing abilities and talents. Balancing responsibilities where you live, volunteer, and work.		
Family, Friends, and Co-Workers: “Relationships” Feeling listened to and connected to people you love and care about. The quality of your communication with family, friends and people you work with.		
Spirit and Soul: “Growing and Connecting” Having a sense of purpose and meaning in your life. Feeling connected to something larger than yourself. Finding strength in difficult times.		
Surroundings: “Physical and Emotional” Feeling safe. Having comfortable, healthy spaces where you work and live. The quality of the lighting, color, air, and water. Decreasing unpleasant clutter, noises, and smells.		
Power of the Mind: “Relaxing and Healing” Tapping into the power of your mind to heal and cope. Using mind-body techniques like relaxation, breathing, or guided imagery.		
Professional Care: “Prevention and Clinical Care” Staying up to date on prevention and understanding your health concerns, care options, treatment plan, and their role in your health.		

Reflections

Now that you have thought about what matters to you in all of these areas, what is your vision of your best possible self? What would your life look like? What kind of activities would you be doing?

Are there any areas you would like to work on? Where might you start?

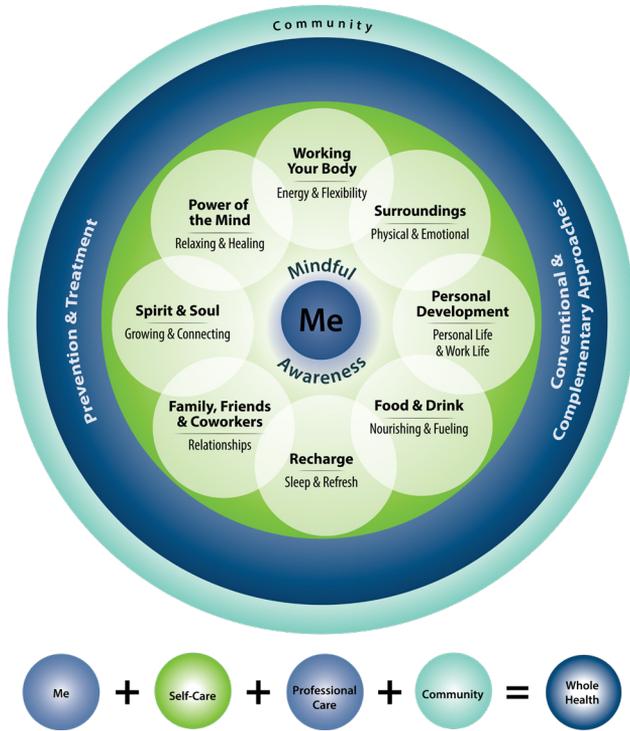
After completing the Personal Health Inventory, talk to a friend, a family member, your health coach, a peer, or someone on your healthcare team about areas you would like to explore further.



My Personal Health Plan Wallet Card

Whole Health is all about helping me live my life to the fullest.

My Mission, Aspiration or Purpose: What do I live for? What matters most to me?



Areas of strength (+), challenge (-) My areas of focus are checked

+ or -	Area of Circle	✓
	Mindful Awareness	
	Working My Body	
	Surroundings	
	Personal Development	
	Food and Drink	
	Recharge	
	Family, Friends and Coworkers	
	Spirit and Soul	
	Power of the Mind	
	Professional Care	
	Community	



Why do I want to be healthy? How does being healthy support what matters most to me?

My overall goals:

My self-care priorities:

Major medical concerns and screenings:

Medications and supplements:

Professional care (conventional and complementary):

My support team (family, friends, health team members):

My education and skill building:

FIVE SIGNS OF SUFFERING



Five Signs of emotional suffering

Nearly one in every five people, or 43.8 million American adults, has a diagnosable mental health condition.¹ Half of all lifetime cases of mental disorders begin by age 14.² In addition, 1.7M Americans sustain a traumatic brain injury each year - which may affect their cognitive and emotional functioning. Drug use is on the rise in this country and 23.5 million Americans are addicted to alcohol and drugs. That's approximately one in every 10 Americans over the age of 12.

Often our friends, neighbors, co-workers, and even family members are suffering emotionally and don't recognize the symptoms or won't ask for help.

Here are five signs that may mean someone is in emotional pain and might need help:



Personality changes.

You may notice sudden or gradual changes in the way that someone typically behaves. People in this situation may behave in ways that don't seem to fit their values, or the person may just seem different.



Uncharacteristically angry, anxious, agitated, or moody.

You may notice the person has more frequent problems controlling his or her temper and seems irritable or unable to calm down. People in more extreme situations of this kind may be unable to sleep or may explode in anger at a minor problem.



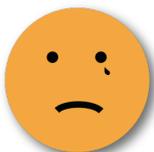
Withdrawal or isolation from other people.

Someone who used to be socially engaged may pull away from family and friends and stop taking part in activities that used to be enjoyable. In more severe cases the person may start failing to make it to work or school. Not to be confused with the behavior of someone who is more introverted, this sign is marked by a change in a person's typical sociability, as when someone pulls away from the social support typically available.



May neglect self-care and engage in risky behavior.

You may notice a change in the person's level of personal care or an act of poor judgment. For instance, someone may let personal hygiene deteriorate, or the person may start abusing alcohol or illicit substances or engaging in other self-destructive behavior that may alienate loved ones.



Overcome with hopelessness and overwhelmed by circumstances.

Have you noticed someone who used to be optimistic and now can't find anything to be hopeful about? That person may be suffering from extreme or prolonged grief, or feelings of worthlessness or guilt. People in this situation may say that the world would be better off without them, suggesting suicidal thinking.



IF YOU RECOGNIZE THAT SOMEONE IN YOUR LIFE IS SUFFERING, NOW WHAT?

You connect, you reach out, you inspire hope, and you offer help. Show compassion and caring and a willingness to find a solution when the person may not have the will or drive to do it alone. There are many resources in our communities.

It may take more than one offer, and you may need to reach out to others who share your concern about the person who is suffering.

If everyone is more open and honest about our emotional health and well-being, we can prevent pain and suffering, and those in need will get the help they deserve.

You can learn more at changedirection.org.

a collective impact effort led by:



¹Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (as of 11/24/14).

²R. C. Kessler, W. T. Chiu, O. Demler, K.R. Merikangas, E. E. Walters. "Prevalence, Severity, and Comorbidity of Twelve-Month DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication." *Arch. Gen. Psych.* June 2005 62(6):617-627.

COMPONENTS OF PROACTIVE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

