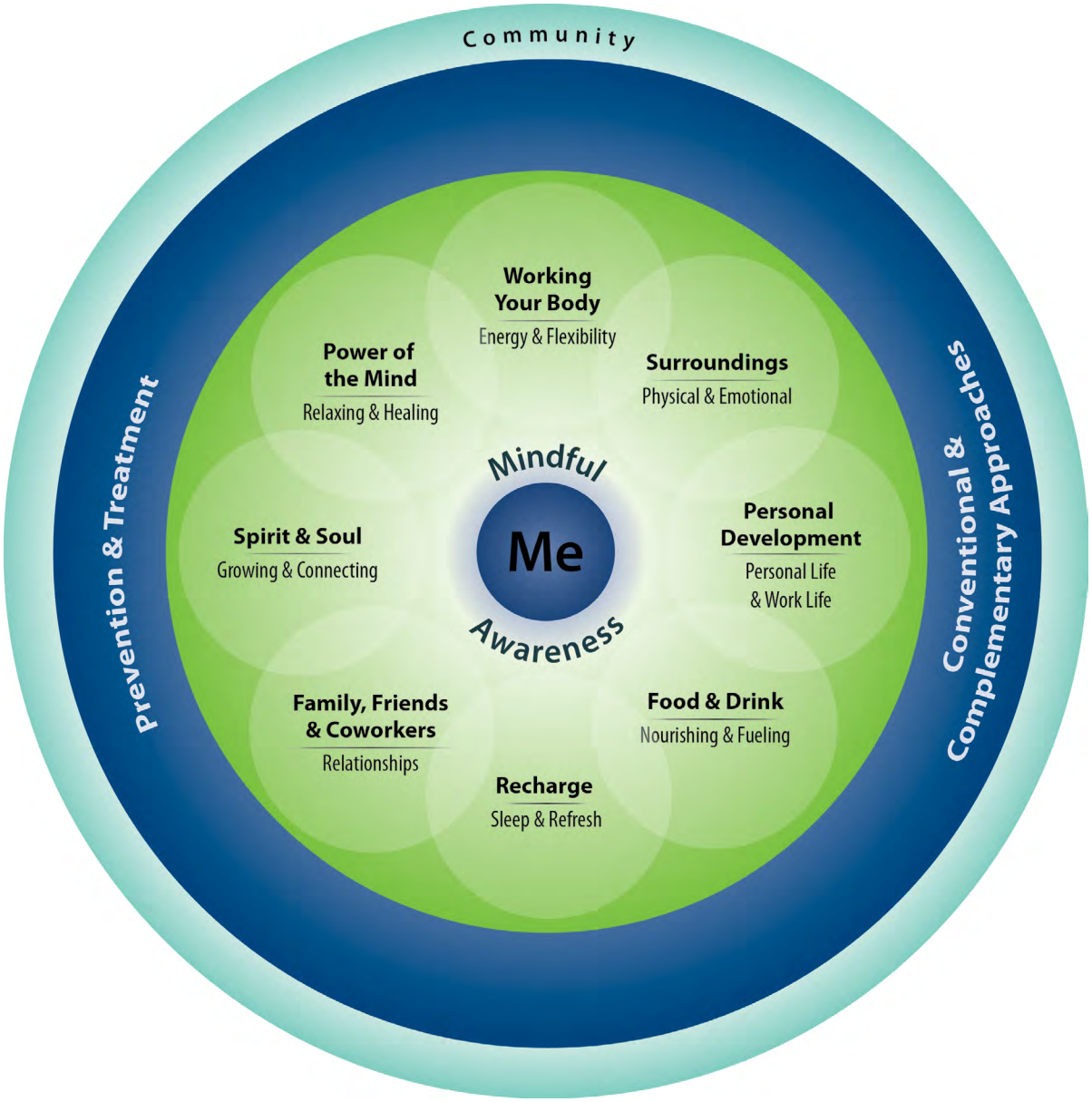
Health for Life

COMPONENTS OF PROACTIVE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



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 we can strengthen these healing abilities. The inner circle 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 to whom you are connected.

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

ME

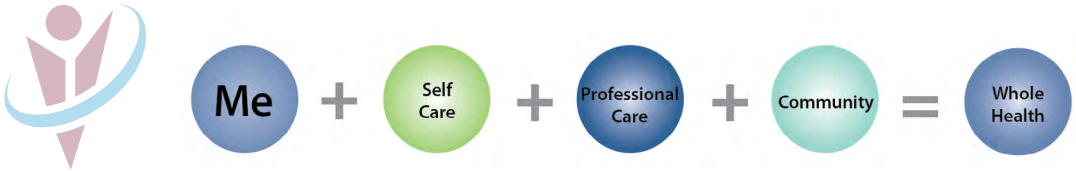
The innermost circle represents each of us as unique individuals. We start at the middle saying, "I am the expert on my life, values, goals, and priorities. Only I can know WHY I want my health. Only I can know what really matters to ME. And this knowledge needs to be what drives my health and my healthcare. 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 medical team professionals are some of the invited players."

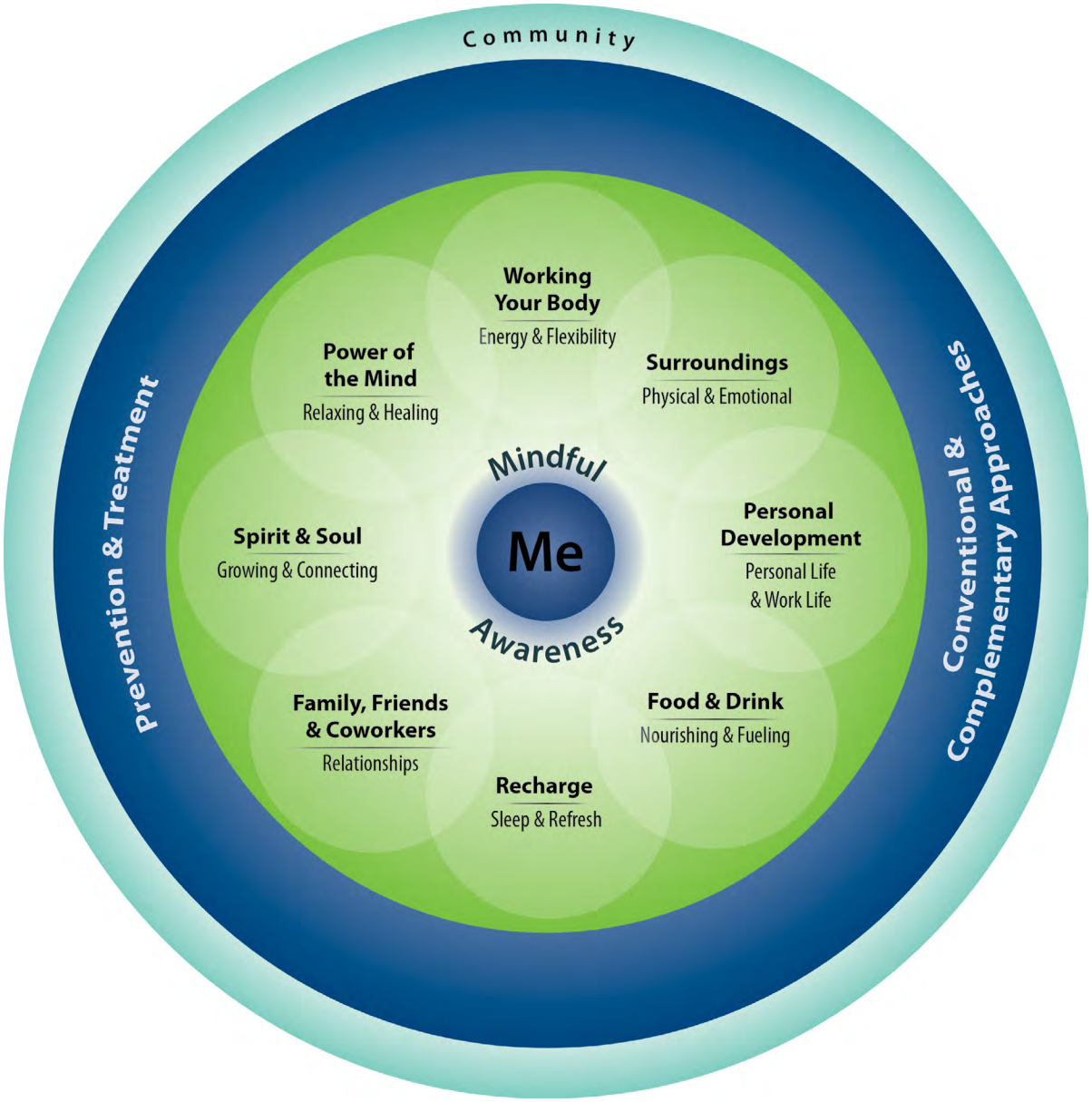
Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this area include (but are not limited to):

What REALLY matters to you in your life?

What do you want your health for?

What is your vision of your best possible health?





MINDFUL AWARENESS

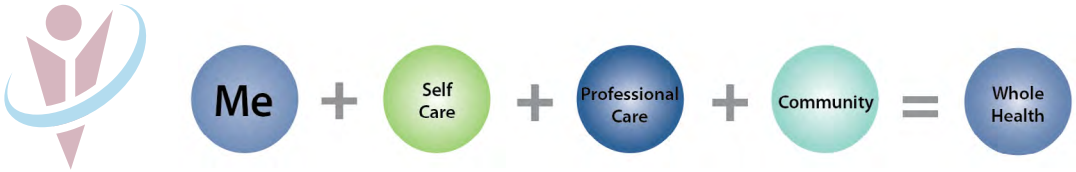
Mindfulness is being fully aware, or paying attention. Sometimes, we go through our daily lives on autopilot. We are not fully aware of the present. We often dwell on the past and plan events in the future. We do not spend much time really paying attention and noticing what is happening right now; without 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.

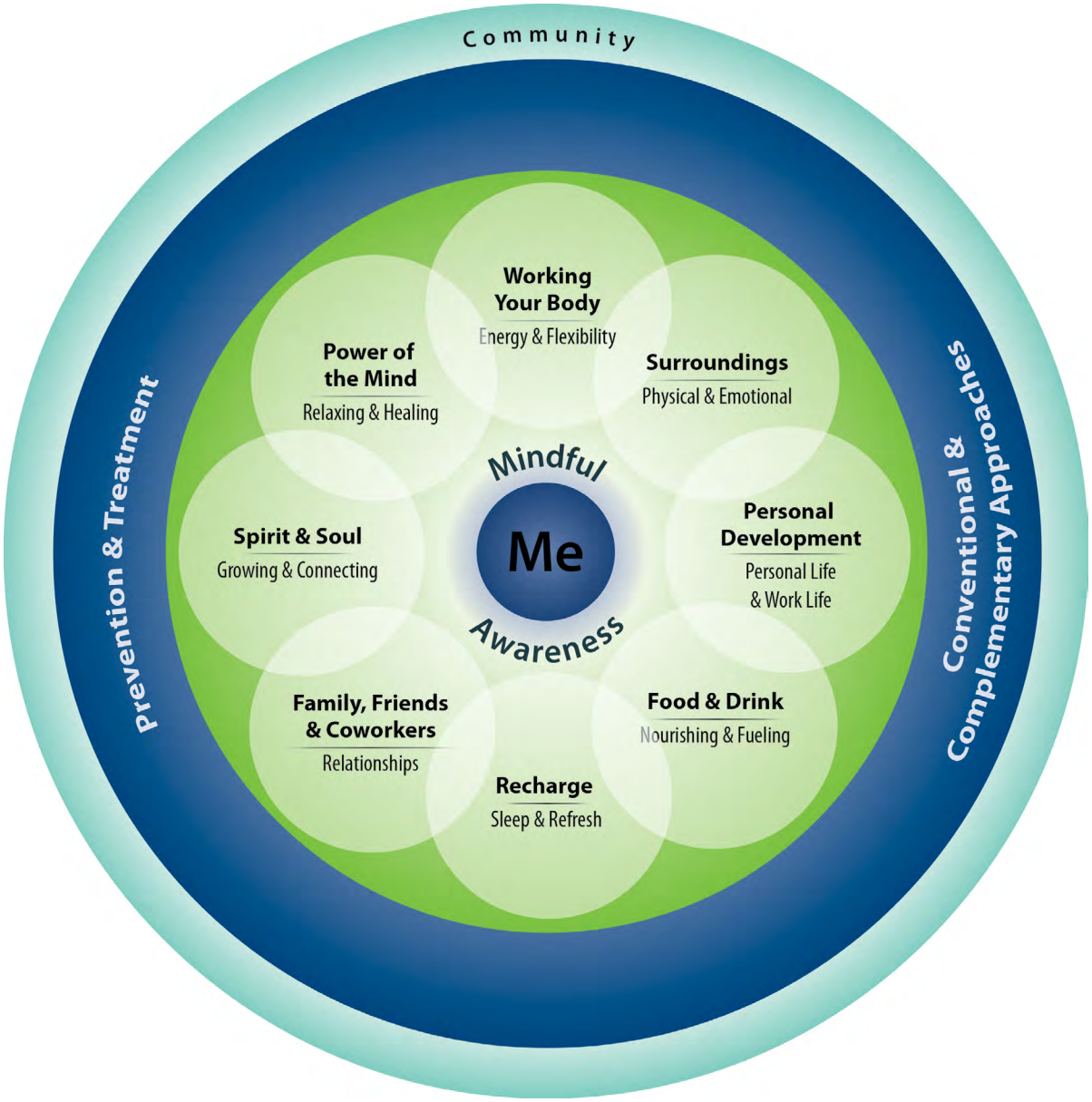
For example, when you miss the whispers of an early discomfort or a sad feeling, you miss the opportunity to make a change before it grows into real pain or depression. Being mindful, or aware, allows you to make conscious proactive choices about every aspect of your health. Mindfulness connects you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

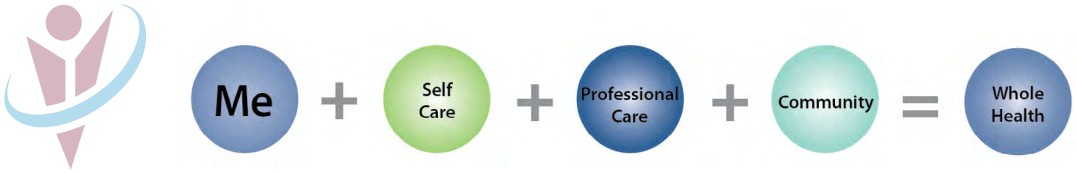
Being fully aware and present without judging is critical to mindful awareness.

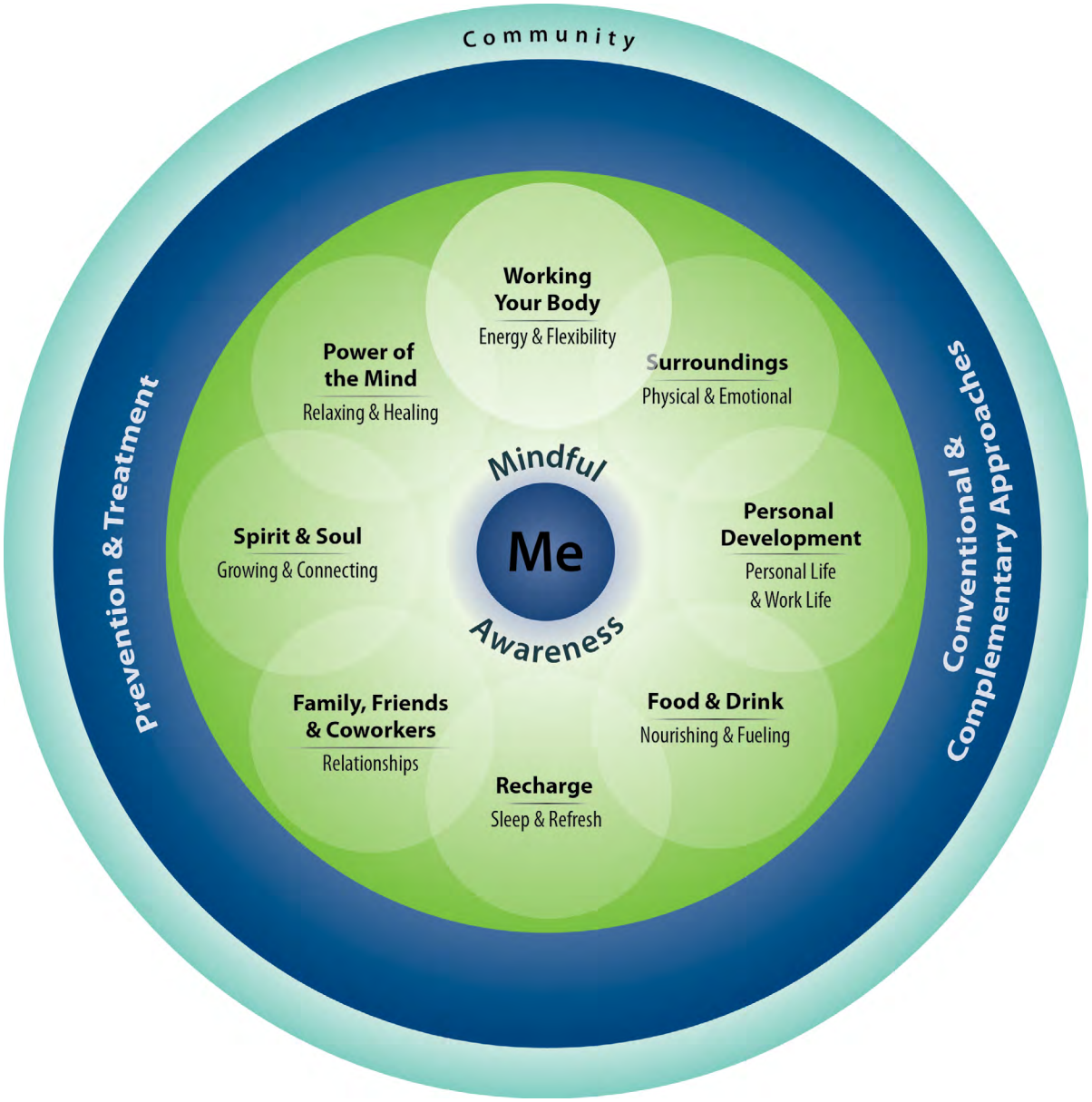




THE EIGHT AREAS OF SELF-CARE

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, how you take care of yourself will have a greater impact on your health and well-being than the medical care you receive. Evidence shows that each of these eight areas of self-care contributes a great deal to your overall health and well-being. They can also affect your chances for developing diseases as well as the 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.





WORKING 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.

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

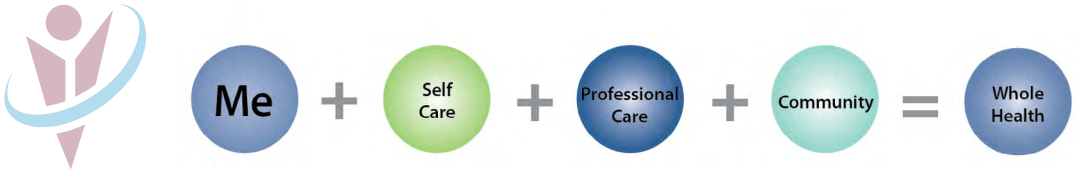
Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this area include (but are not limited to):

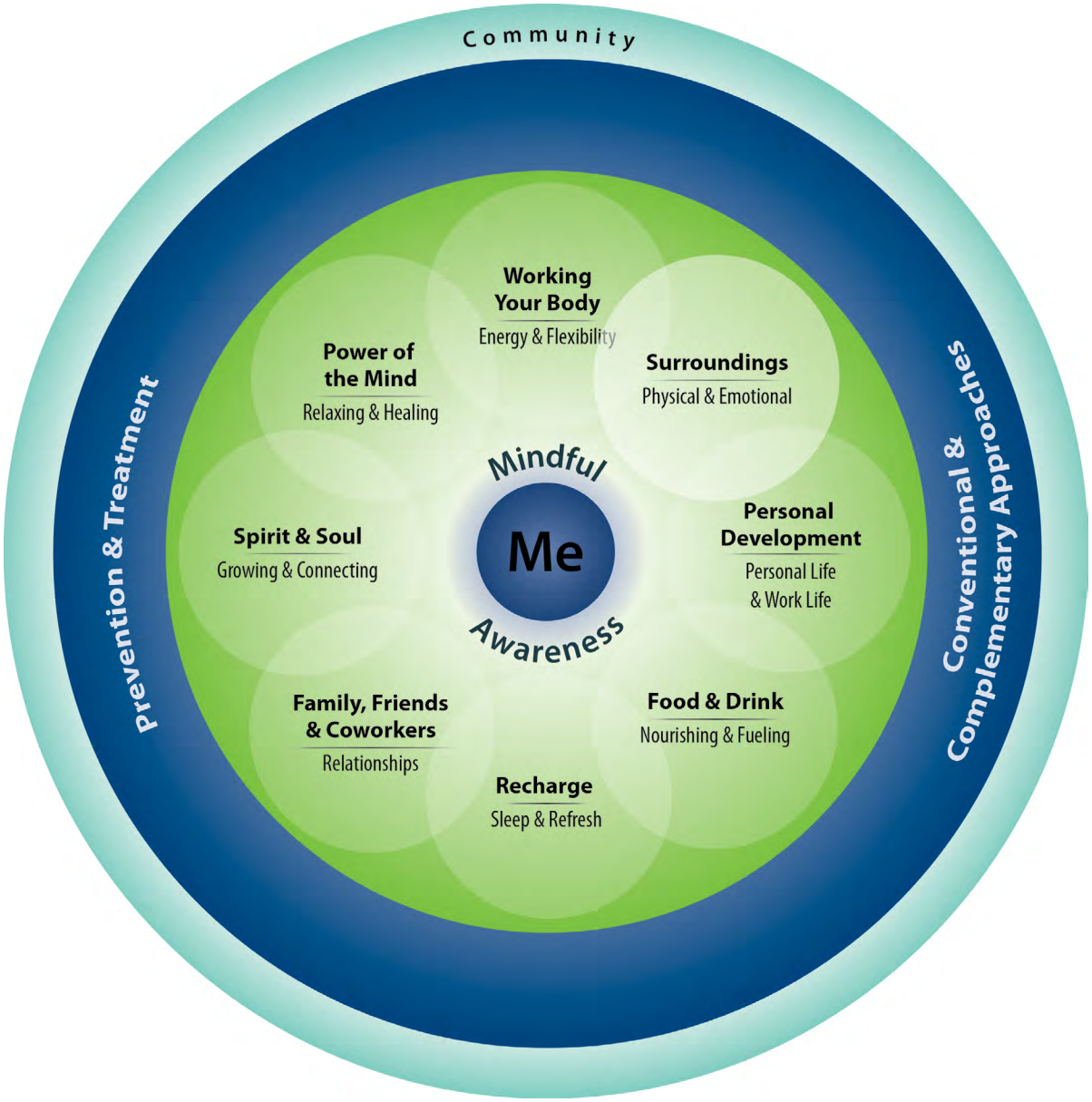
VA National Rehabilitation Programs *(e.g., Veterans sports clinics, games)*

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

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

Tai Chi





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.

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

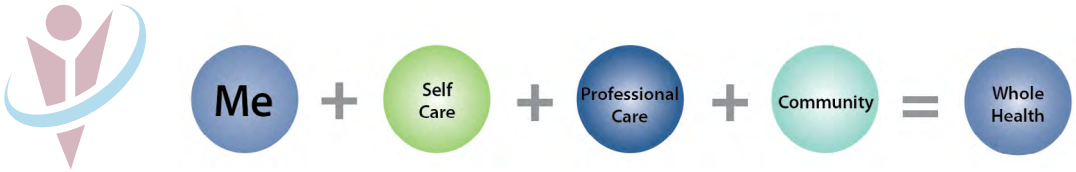
Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this area include (but are not limited to):

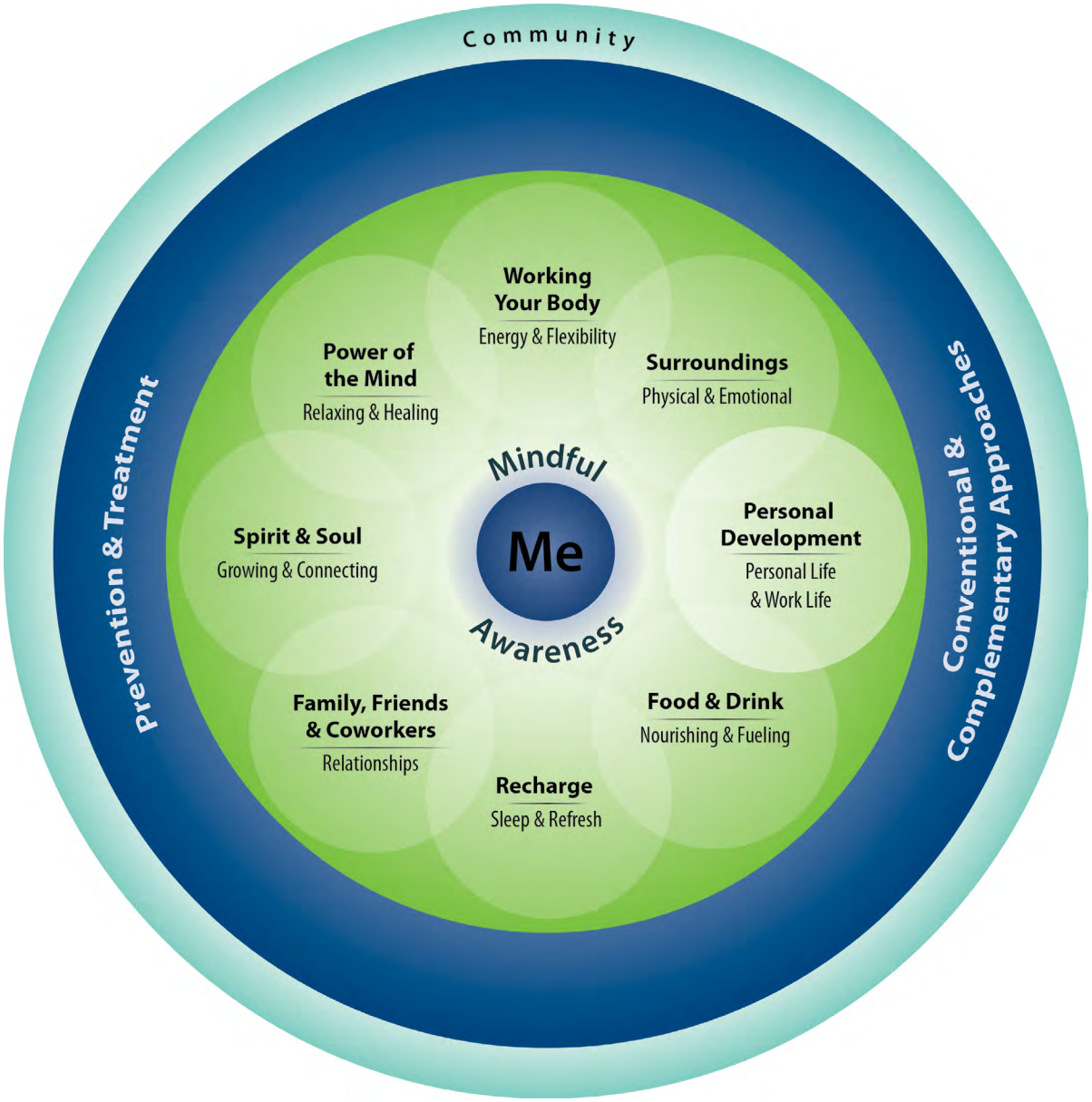
HUD/VASH *(Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing)*

Creative Arts Festival

VA Home Loans

Pets





PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

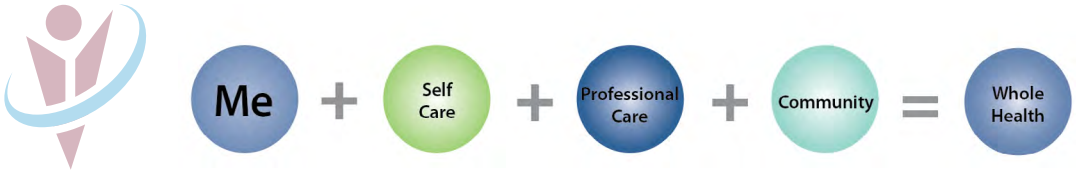
Personal Life and Work Life

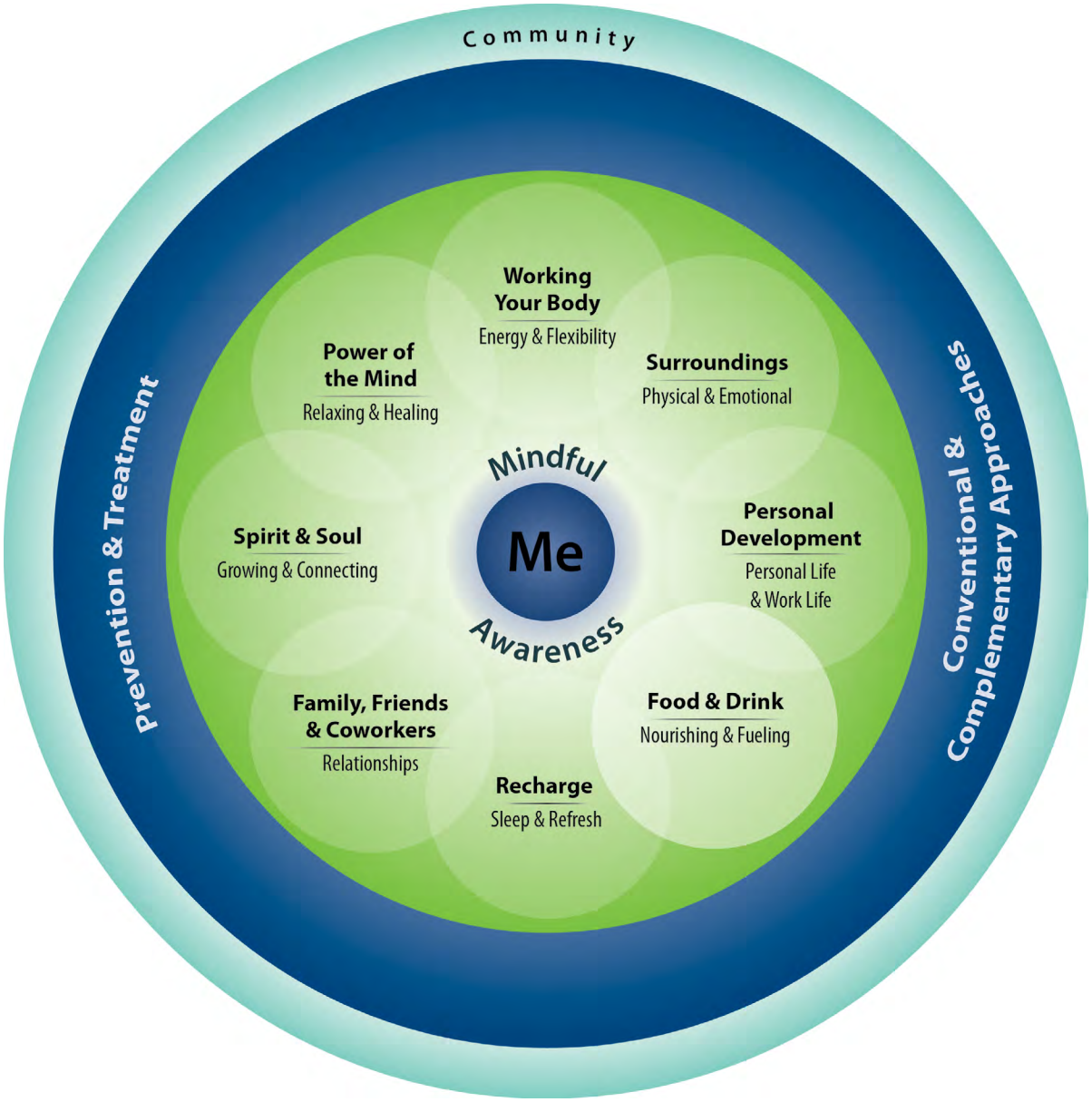
No matter where you are in life, your personal and work life is very important. How do you spend your time and energy during the day? Do things give you energy or make you tired? Do you spend time doing what matters most to you? How do you feel about your finances and how are they affecting your life? These factors affect not only your happiness, but also your health.

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

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





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.

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

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

Nutrition Classes

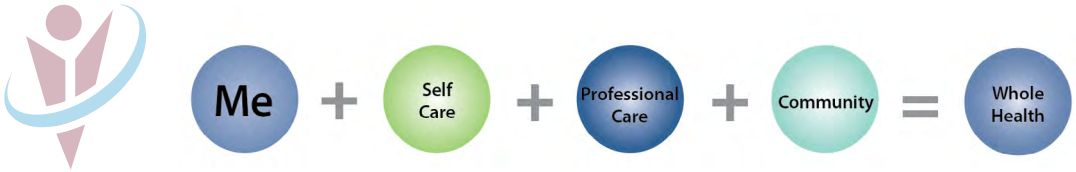
Farmers Markets and Healthy Canteen Choices *(Veterans Canteen Service)*

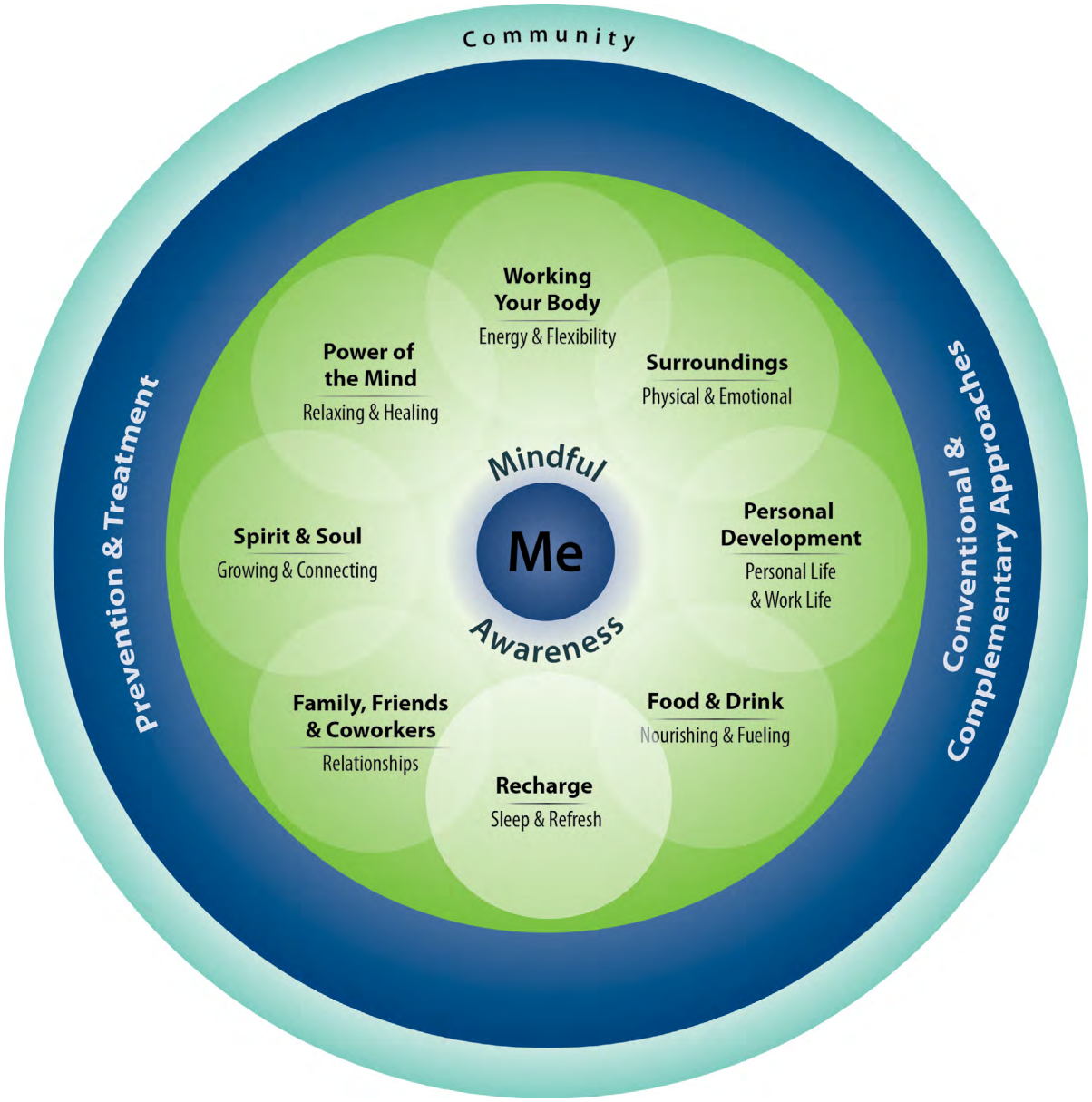
Horticultural Training Programs *(Master Gardeners)*

Demonstration Kitchen *(Nutrition & Food Service)*

MOVE! Weight Management Program

Tobacco Cessation Programs





RECHARGE

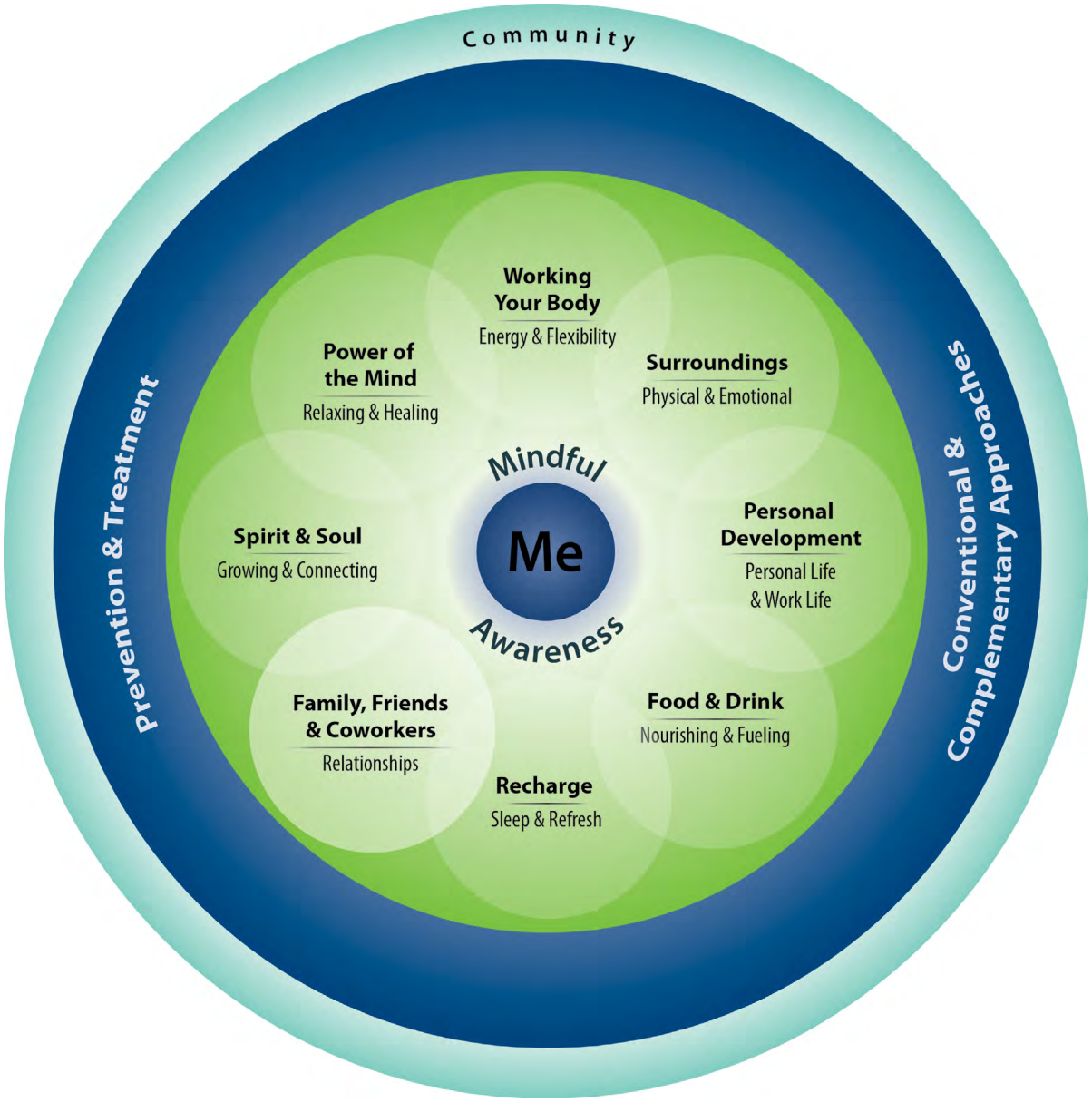
Sleep and Refresh

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.

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

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

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



FAMILY, FRIENDS, & 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.

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

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

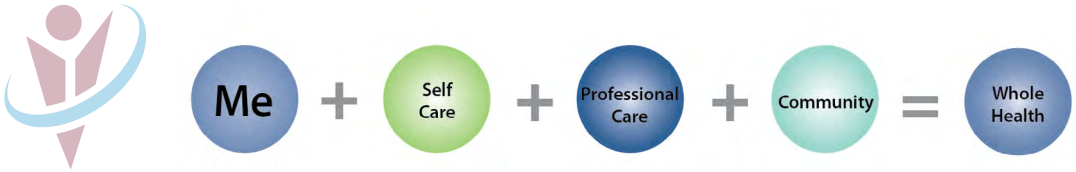
Peer Support Program

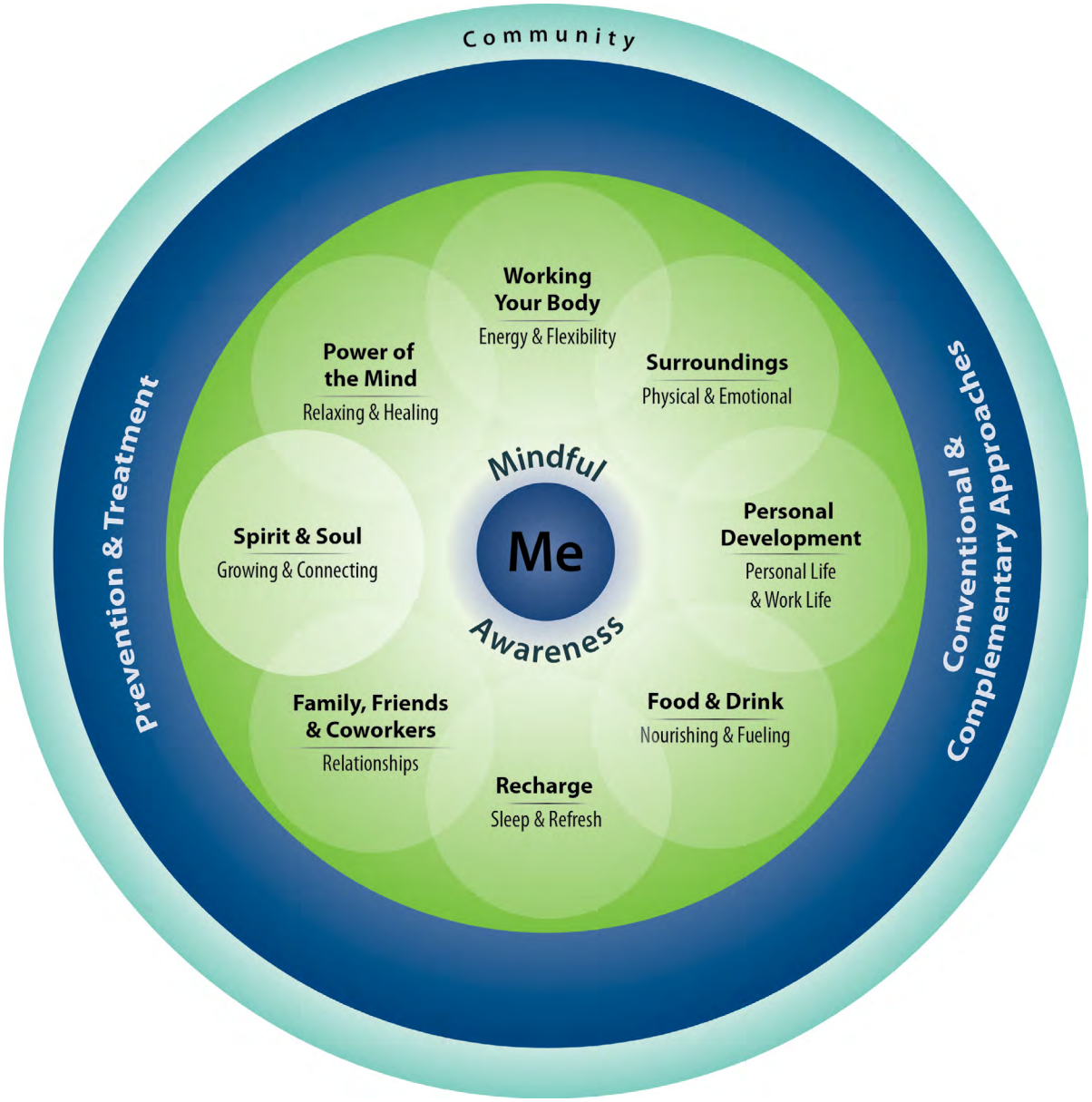
Marriage and Family Therapy

Caregiver Support Program

Care4Giver *(Mobile App)*

Veterans Center Counseling





SPIRIT & SOUL

Growing and Connecting

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.

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

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

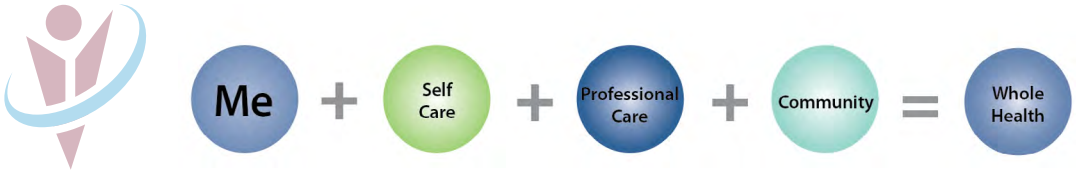
Chaplaincy Service

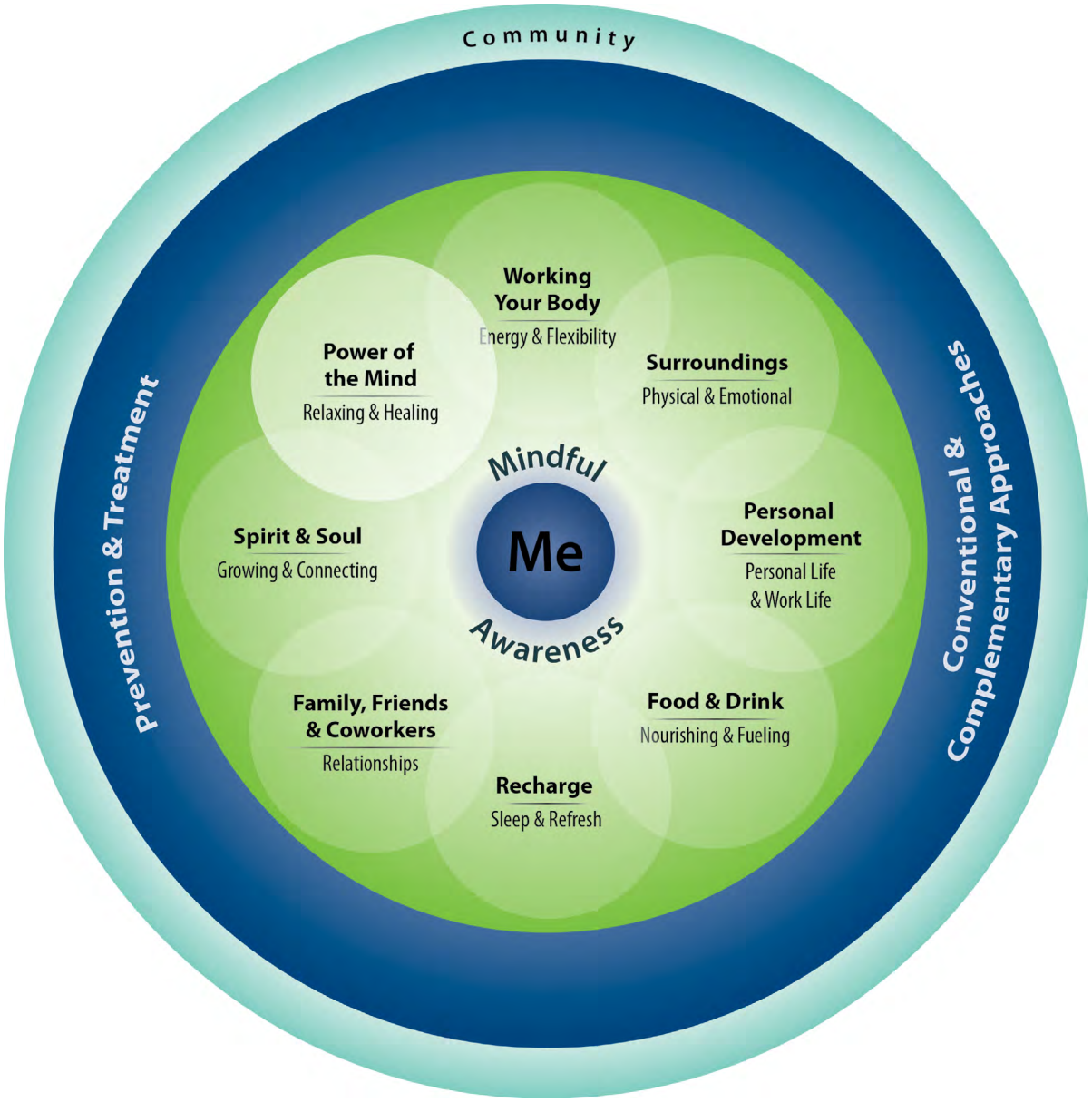
Living History Project

Drum Circles

Sweat Lodges

Labyrinths





POWER OF THE MIND

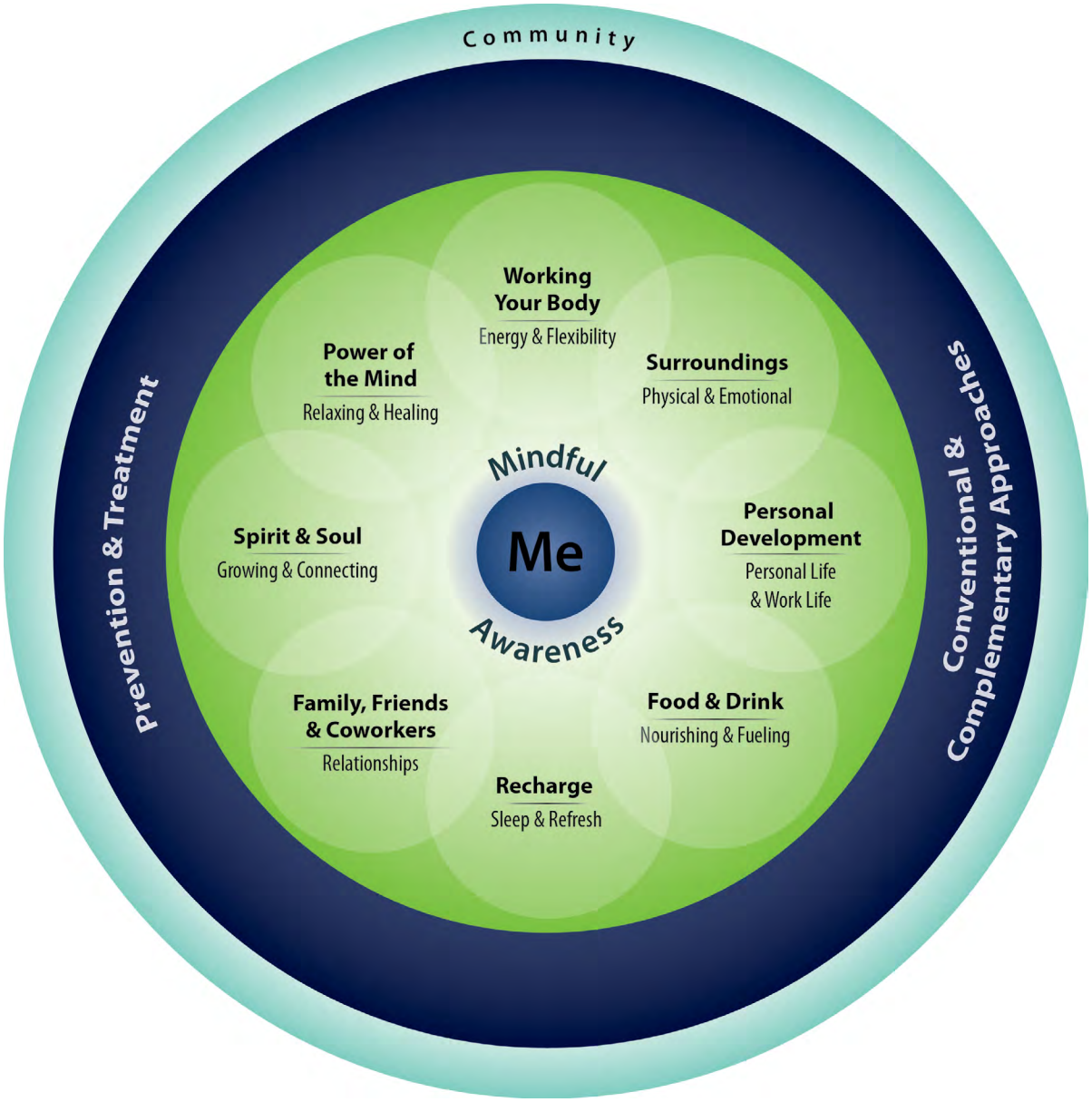
Relaxing and Healing

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.

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

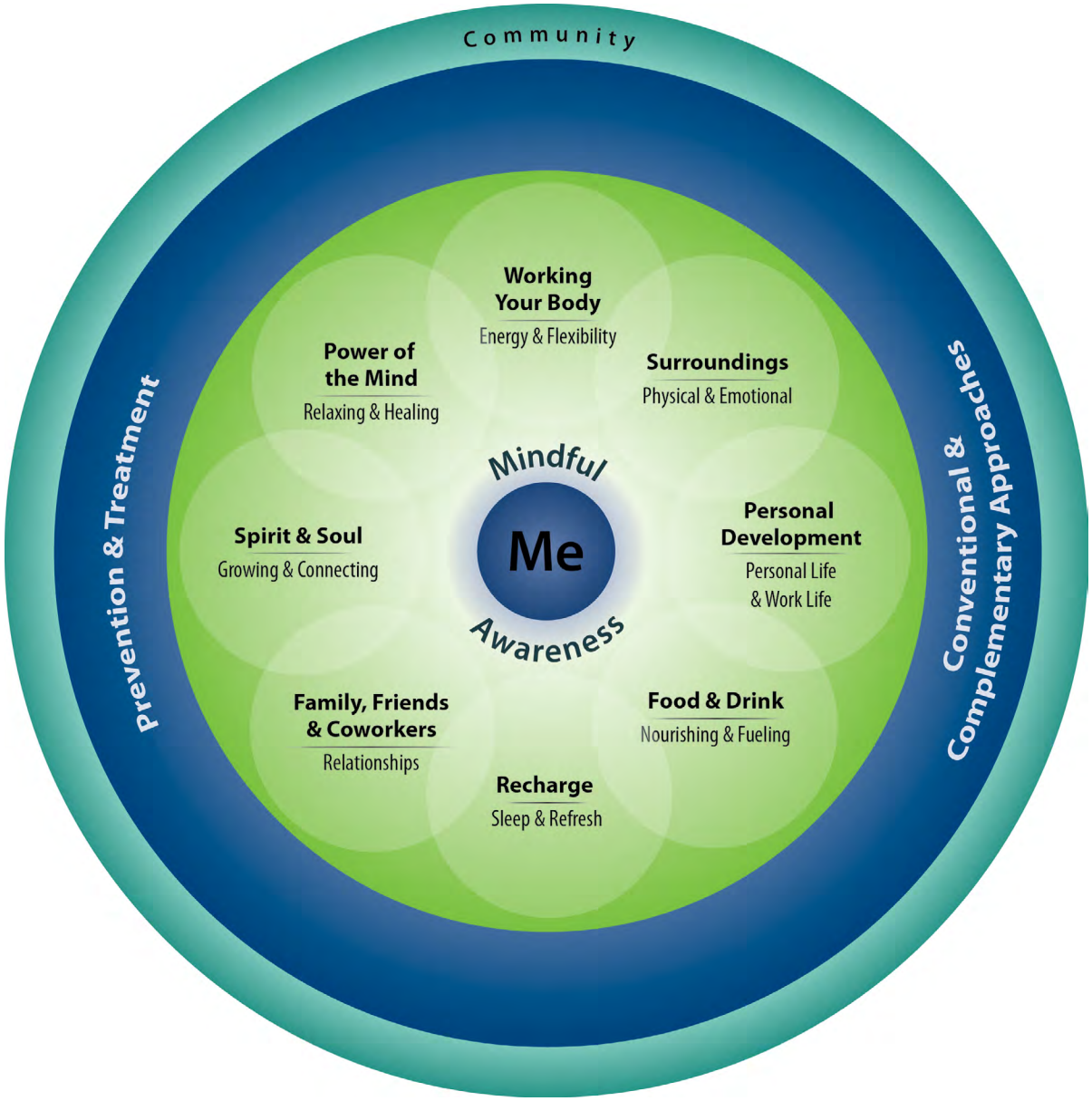
Examples of the types of services Veterans can access and use to support this area include (but are not limited to):

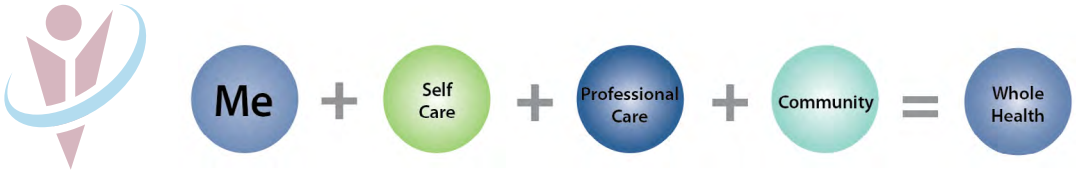
- **Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)**
- **Stress Management Programs**
- **Biofeedback Programs**
- **Relaxation Breathing**
- **Tai Chi, Yoga, Qi Gong**
- **Meditation**
- **Guided Imagery Tools**
- **Mantram Repetition**
- **Breathe2Relax (Mobile App)**



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 by and for others it is far way. 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.