FRONT & CENTER

Providing News to Our Veterans

May 2022

Whole Health: Start Small

What matters to you? That is the primary question associated with VA's Whole Health program. Whole Health centers around what matters to you, not what is the matter with you. This means your health team will get to know you as a person, before working with you to develop a personalized health plan based on your values, needs, and goals.

Dr. Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Michele Papakie was introduced to Whole Health at the Butler VA last year. She was both intrigued and skeptical. Michele agreed to meet with Whole Health coach Karen Justi, and together they discussed her "why" (which was easy: her grandchildren). From there, she was given her first assignment: Complete a Personal Health Inventory.

The Personal Health Inventory is a self-assessment tool to help pinpoint areas to work on. Based on her answers, one of the areas Michele chose was: Spirit and Soul.

"I had told Nurse Justi I felt the most joy when I was with my grandchildren. We explored the idea of how being present contributes to much of our happiness," said Michele. "She suggested we practice mindfulness. I told her I had tried this, and that I have monkey mind, and am a terrible meditator."

However, she then issued Michele a challenge: Choose a habit you already do but do it mindfully.

Michele chose to focus on making her morning protein smoothie. A simple task, but one she found herself doing distractedly that she sometimes forgot if she even added her protein powder to it.

"I began to make my smoothie mindfully. This included engaging all my senses in the process—seeing each ingredient, smelling them all, feeling the cold sensations, listening to my NutriBullet blend them, and finally, tasting and feeling my smoothie flow down my throat to nourish my body."

With the help of her Whole Health Coach, Michele has since expanded this simple task into a morning ritual that includes several other elements of wellness. It helps set the tone for her entire day.

Her advice to other Veterans: "Start small; you will be amazed at how one simple act of mindfulness can quickly lead to a healthier, productive, and balanced lifestyle."

The Butler VA offers a variety of Whole Health courses, resources, workshops, and more for Veterans. From an introductory class for those just starting their whole health journey, to one-on-one support with a whole health coach, there are many options available for Veterans.

Talk to your health care team today or visit *www.va.gov/wholehealth* to get started.

> "Start small; you will be amazed at how one simple act of mindfulness can quickly lead to a healthier, productive, and balanced lifestyle." - *Michele Papakie, PA National Guard Veteran*

Choose VA

From Music to Martial Arts

From harmonica and drumming classes to martial arts, the Butler VA offers a variety of (free) health and wellness classes and workshops for Veterans. Virtual options are available too.

Enroll today! *www.choose.va.gov*.

Veteran Health & Enrollment Fair—Saturday, May 21

Veterans, join us for a free health and enrollment fair at the Abie Abraham VA Health Care Center, 353 North Duffy Road, Butler. Veterans will be pre-screened for eligibility prior to being scheduled for an appointment and will need their DD-214. **Call 878-271-6645 to confirm your appointment today!**

MULTICULTURAL MONDAYS

Join us in our effort to respect personal and cultural diversity! Lunch food trucks are available from 11:30am-1pm at the Abie Abraham VA Clinic, 353 North Duffy Road, Butler.

- May 2: Gravy Griddle Co.
- May 16: Burritos by Brett
- May 23: Gravy Griddle Co

Questions? Call 724-290-9072.

Check our web calendar for additional dates and details coming soon: *www.va.gov/butler-health-care/events/*

VA2K WALK & ROLL 2022

Support homeless Veterans and promote health and well-being

Join us for the 12th Annual VA2K Walk and Roll on Tuesday, May 17, from 5-8pm (New Castle Road campus) and Wednesday, May 18, from 11am-2pm (Abie Abraham HCC).

Together with fellow community members, Veterans, and VA employees, we will walk or roll 1.2 miles. Donations to benefit homeless Veterans are also welcome, but voluntary. Please visit our Facebook page for more details: *www.facebook.com/VAButlerPA* or contact VA2K Coordinator Meridith Paterson at 878-271-6718.

RELIEF IS AVAILABLE AT VA

Did you know: 30% of women Veterans experience chronic pelvic pain?

Chronic pelvic pain is common, and relief is available for women Veterans at VA. If you are experiencing chronic pelvic pain, talk to your VA primary care provider, and they will work with you to discover the cause and create an effective, individual treatment plan. Learn more about chronic pelvic pain in women Veterans: *https://www.pelvicpaineducation.com/veterans*

VA HEALTH CHAT NOW AVAILABLE

Do you have a question about a minor health issue but are not sure if you need an appointment? Do you need a prescription refilled? You can now receive care from VA without stepping foot into a facility using VA Health Chat.

Use VA Health Chat to be connected quickly to a VISN 4 Clinical Contact Center nurse who is ready to give you medical advice when you:

- Feel ill and unsure about going to an emergency room or clinic
- Have a reaction to a medication
- Have questions about your prescriptions or need a refill
- Need medical advice for a minor injury or illness

Our nurses are available to chat from 7:30am-4pm, Monday through Friday, except federal holidays.

Visit *https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-chat* to learn more.

SALUTE YOU

Thank you for your service

MICHELE PAPAKIE, PENNSYLVANIA AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Michele Papakie retired from the 171st Air Refueling Wing of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard in 2019 with 32-years of service. She served in Bagram, Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Let us "Salute You!" Contact the Butler VA Public Affairs Office for more information.

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Butler VA Health Care System

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