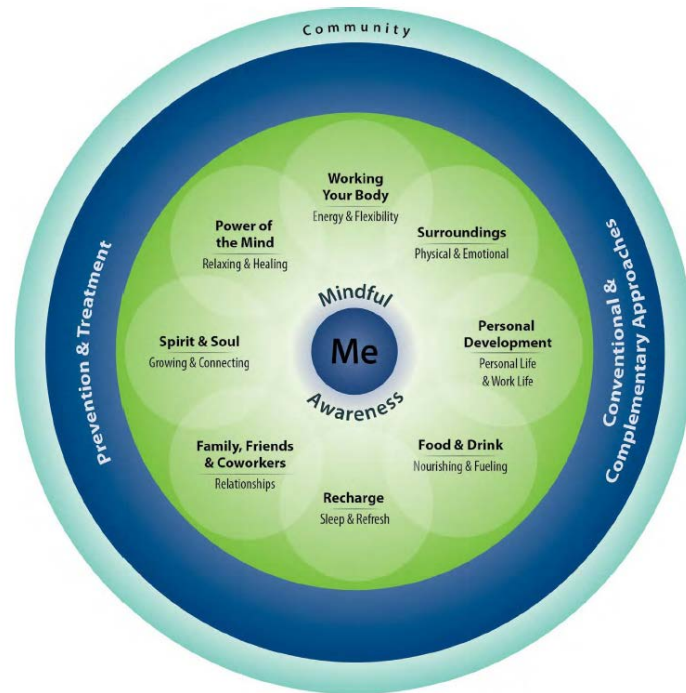


WHOLE HEALTH: INFORMATION FOR VETERANS

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!

Whole Health: It Starts With Me

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.¹ 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 self-care 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,² 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. Self-care 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 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.

More information will be available on [our website](#) for each of these topics.

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.**

This handout was written for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) by Charlene Luchterhand MSSW, Education and Research Coordinator, Integrative Health Program, University of Wisconsin Department of Family Medicine and Community Health. The handout was reviewed and edited by Veterans and VHA subject matter experts.

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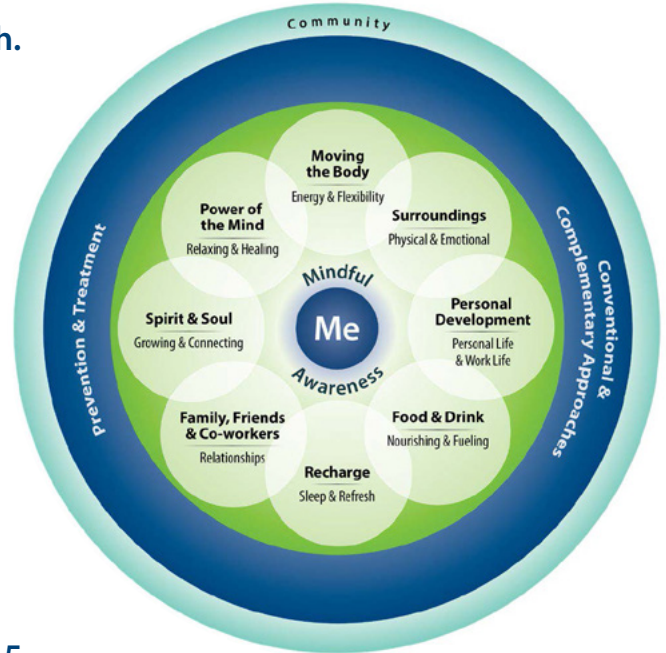
1. Press Ganey Associates. Competing on Patient-Driven Value: The New Health Care Marketplace. Press Ganey Special Report—2015 strategic insights. 2015.
2. Ford ES, Bergmann MM, Kroger J, Schienkiewitz A, Weikert C, Boeing H. Healthy living is the best revenge: findings from the European prospective investigation into cancer and nutrition-Potsdam study. Arch Intern Med. 2009;169(15):1355-1362. doi: 10.1001/archinternmed.2009.237. Epub 2009/08/12.

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PERSONAL HEALTH INVENTORY

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

- “Me” at the center of the circle: This represents what is important to you in your life, and may include your mission, aspirations, or purpose. Your care focuses on you as a unique person.
- Mindful awareness is about noticing what is happening when it happens.
- Your everyday actions make up the green circle. Your options and choices may be affected by many factors.
- The next ring is professional care (tests, medications, treatments, surgeries, and counseling). This section includes complementary approaches like acupuncture and yoga.
- The outer ring includes the people, places, and resources in your community. Your community has a powerful influence on your personal experience of health and well-being.



Rate where you feel you are on the scales below from 1–5, with 1 being not so good, and 5 being great.

Physical Well-Being	1 NOT SO GOOD	2	3	4	5 GREAT
Mental/Emotional Well-Being	1 NOT SO GOOD	2	3	4	5 GREAT
Life: How is it to live your day-to-day life?	1 NOT SO GOOD	2	3	4	5 GREAT

What matters most to you in your life right now? 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.

Building Blocks of Health and Well-being	Where I am Now (1-5)	Where I Want to Be (1-5)
Moving the Body: Our physical, mental, and emotional health are impacted by the amount and kind of movement we do.		
Recharge: Our bodies and minds need rest in order to optimize our health. Recharging also involves activities that replenish your mental and physical energy.		
Food and Drink: What we eat, and drink can have a huge effect on how we experience life, both physically and mentally.		
Personal Development: Our health is impacted by how we spend our time. We feel best when we can do things that really matter to us or bring us joy.		
Family, Friends, and Co-Workers: Our relationships, including those with pets, have as significant an effect on our physical and emotional health as any other factor associated with well-being.		
Spirit and Soul: Connecting with something greater than ourselves may provide a sense of meaning and purpose, peace, or comfort. Spiritual connection can take many forms.		
Surroundings: Surroundings include where we live, work, learn, play, and worship—both indoors and out. Safe, stable, and comfortable surroundings have a positive effect on our health.		
Power of the Mind: Our thoughts are powerful and can affect our physical, mental, and emotional health. Changing our mindset can aid in healing and coping.		
Professional Care: Partnering with your health care team to address your health concerns, understand care options, and define actions you may take to promote your health and goals.		

Reflections

Now that you have thought about what matters to you in all of these areas, what would your life look like if you had the health you want? What kind of activities would you be doing? Or how might you feel different? What area might you focus on?

What might get in the way? How 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 health care team about areas you would like to explore further. Or visit www.va.gov/wholehealth.



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System
Whole Health

Whole Health Clinical Services

Veteran Whole Health Clinical Services are available to help you care for your mind and body. Below is a few of the services that may be available to you!

Clinical Services must be discussed with a member of your health care team to ensure that the service is right for you. Your health care team can enter a consult to get you started!

- Biofeedback
- Dry Needling
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Social Group
- Chiropractic Care
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Relationship Health and Safety Group
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) Group
- Hypnosis
- Equine (Horse) Therapy
- Social Work Services
- Peer Support Assistance
- Gerofit Program
- Life Enrichment Center
- Advanced Care Planning
- Traditional Acupuncture
- Battlefield Acupuncture

**Talk with Your Health Care Team for a
Whole Health Consult today!**





VA



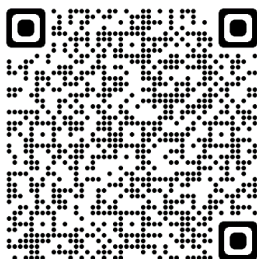
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System
Whole Health

Whole Health and Wellness Services

Veteran Health and Wellness Services are available for you to help you care for your mind and body.

You can **Self-Enroll** in any of the below **Wellness Services** without the help of your health care team.

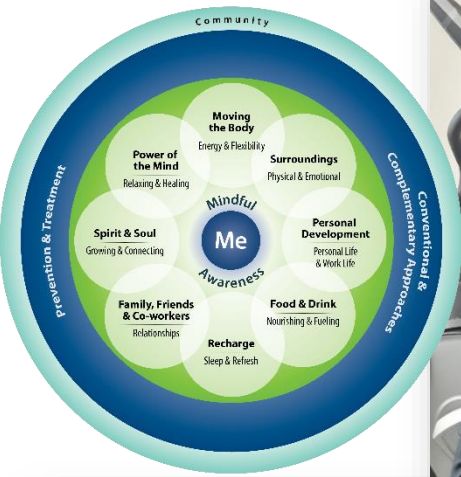
- Introduction to Whole Health Class
- Taking Charge of My Life and Health Class
- Whole Health Coaching
- Mindfulness Practices and Classes
- Yoga- On-Demand Videos
- Yoga In Person - Beginner / Chair and Slow Flow Classes
- Mindfulness Based Tai Chi
- The Great Outdoors nature class
- Smoking Cessation Class
- MOVE! Weight Management Program
- Individual Nutrition Classes with Various Focus
- Healthy Teaching Kitchen
- Chaplain Services
- Recreational Therapy Classes, i.e., Gardening, Music Groups, etc.
- #LiveWholeHealth- On-Demand Videos for yoga, tai chi, acupressure, meditation and much more
- Online Veterans Health Library - www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov
- VA Smartphone Apps



Scan this QR code for enrollment information on our VA EK Whole Health Website or visit:

<https://www.va.gov/eastern-kansas-health-care/work-with-us/volunteer-or-donate/whole-health/>

TAKING CHARGE OF MY LIFE AND HEALTH



VIRTUAL CLASS

THURSDAYS FROM 10AM-12PM

IN PERSON CLASS

TUESDAYS FROM 2PM-4PM, TOPEKA

6 WEEK SESSIONS

Join fellow Veterans and explore what matters most to you, support one another as you set and achieve goals and learn ways to optimize your health and well-being.

Complete your Personal Health Inventory, create SMART Goals and engage in self-care activities.

All Veterans welcome.

Sign up today:

Eastern Kansas HealthCare System

Phone: 913-682-2000

Extension: 62699



Five Signs of Emotional Suffering

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.