VA HEALTH CARE Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century

Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation

Health for Life ©

MyStory: Personal Health Inventory

MyStory

Personal Health Inventory

VA Health

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Revision 20 October 7, 2013

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Developed by the Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation

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

"You ought not to attempt to cure the eyes without the head or the head without the body, so neither ought you attempt to cure the body without the soul….for the part can never be well unless the whole is well."
Plato

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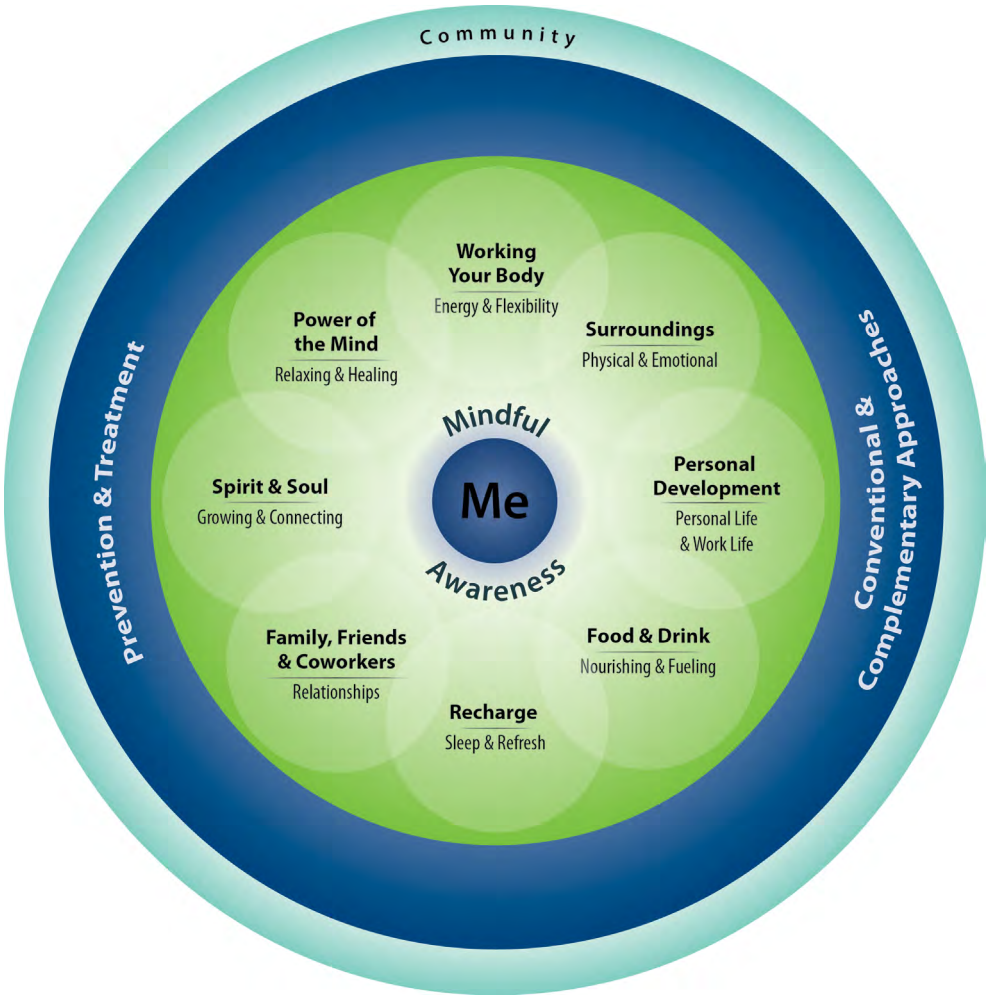
YOUR MISSION *FOR LIFE*

INTRODUCTION

WHOLE HEALTH AND YOU AS A WHOLE PERSON

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

THE 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. There is more information about the areas of the circle at the end of this workbook.

DISCOVERING WHY YOU WANT YOUR HEALTH AND DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH GOALS

You are the expert on you! The first and most important step in creating your roadmap to your healthiest life is to step back from your health concerns, and think about your life. What really matters to you? Why do you want or need your health? Sometimes, it can be hard to figure this out. This workbook will help you think about where you are now and where you want to be. Take a few minutes to relax and really think broadly and openly as you answer the questions. You may use additional paper to answer the questions, if you need to.

YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH INVENTORY

1. What REALLY matters to you in your life?

2. What brings you a sense of joy and happiness?

3. On the following scales from 1-5, with 1 being miserable and 5 being great, circle where you feel you are on the scale.

Physical Well-Being:

1	2	3	4	5
Miserable				Great

Mental/Emotional Well-Being:

1	2	3	4	5
Miserable				Great

Life: How is it to live your day-to-day life?

1	2	3	4	5
Miserable				Great

WHERE YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU'D LIKE TO BE

For each area below, consider where you are now and where you would like to be. All the areas are important. In the "Where you are" box, briefly write the reasons you chose your number. In the "Where you want to be" box, write down some changes that might make this area better for you. Some areas are strongly connected to other areas, so you may notice some of your answers seem the same. Try to fill out as many areas as you can. You do not have to write in every area or in all the areas at one time. You might want to start with the easier ones and come back to the harder ones. It is OK just to circle the numbers.

Working the Body: *"Energy and Flexibility"* Includes movement and physical activities like walking, dancing, gardening, sports, lifting weights, yoga, cycling, swimming, and working out in a gym.	
Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) 1 2 3 4 5	Where would you like to be? 1 2 3 4 5
What are the reasons you choose this number?	What changes could you make to help you get there?

Recharge: *"Sleep and Refresh"* Getting enough rest, relaxation, and sleep.	
Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) 1 2 3 4 5	Where would you like to be? 1 2 3 4 5
What are the reasons you choose this number?	What changes could you make to help you get there?

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

Personal Development: *"Personal life and Work life"* Learning and growing. Developing abilities and talents. Balancing responsibilities where you live, volunteer, and work.	
Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) 1 2 3 4 5	Where would you like to be? 1 2 3 4 5
What are the reasons you choose this number?	What changes could you make to help you get there?

Family, Friends, and Co-Workers: *"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.	
Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) 1 2 3 4 5	Where would you like to be? 1 2 3 4 5
What are the reasons you choose this number?	What changes could you make to help you get there?

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

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

Power of the Mind: *"Strengthen and Listen"* Tapping into the power of your mind to heal and cope. Using mind-body techniques like relaxation, breathing, or guided imagery.	
Where you are: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) 1 2 3 4 5	Where would you like to be? 1 2 3 4 5
What are the reasons you choose this number?	What changes could you make to help you get there?

PROFESSIONAL CARE

Prevention: On a scale of 1-5, circle the number that best describes how up to date you are on your preventive care such as a flu shot, cholesterol check, cancer screening, and dental care.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	A little bit	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much

Clinical Care: If you are working with a healthcare professional, on a scale of 1-5, circle the number that best describes how well you understand your health problems, the treatment plan, and your role in your health.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	A little bit	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much

☐ I am not working with a healthcare professional.

REFLECTIONS

1. Now that you have thought about all of these areas, what is your vision of your best possible health? What would your life look like? What kind of activities would you be doing?

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ME

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

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.

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 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.

Surroundings *"Physical and Emotional"*

Your environment can affect your health. You may have problems with safety, or things like clutter, noise, bad smells, poor lighting or water quality. You may be able to change some of these problems. You may not be able to change them all. It starts with paying attention to the influences of your environment on your life and health. Improve what you can. It's good to have a safe, comfortable, and healthy space.

Personal Development *"Personal Life and Work Life"*
No matter where you are in life, your personal and work life 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.

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.

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

Family, Friends, and Co-Workers *"Relationships"*
Feeling alone can sometimes make you get sick or keep you sick. Positive social relationships are healthy. A healthy intimate relationship with a life partner can be a source of strength. It's good to talk to people who care about you and listen to you.

Spirit and Soul *"Growing and Connecting"*
A sense of meaning and purpose in life is important to many people. When things are hard, where do you turn for strength and comfort? Some people turn to spiritual or religious faith. Some people find comfort in nature. Some connect with art, music or prefer quiet time alone. Some want to help others. You may express this as a guide to living fully.

Power of the Mind *"Strengthen and Listen"*
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.

PROFESSIONAL CARE

Prevention and treatment of illness or disease and traditional and complementary medicine are part of professional care. Preventive care includes things like immunizations and cancer screening. Common treatments include check-ups, medicines, supplements, physical therapy, surgery, and counseling. Complementary medicine includes approaches like acupuncture and mind-body therapies. It is important to stay current with your personal care plan for health and well-being.

COMMUNITY

The outer ring represents your community. For some, their community is close and for others it is far away. Your community is more than the places where you live, work, and worship. It includes all the people and groups you connect with; who rely on you and upon whom you rely.