

Live Whole Health.

Whole Health: Empowering Veterans

Nancy Donovan

Associate Director, Communications and Strategic Partnerships

VHA Office of Patient Centered Care & Cultural Transformation (OPCC&CT)

January 5, 2021 – VSO Communicators Meeting

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

“We’ve been wrong about what our job is in medicine.
We think our job is to ensure health and survival.
But really it is larger than that.
It is to enable well-being.
And well-being is about the reasons one wishes to be alive.
Those reasons matter not just at the end of life,
or when disability comes,
but all along the way.”

Whole Health: A Partnership that Empowers

Whole Health

is an approach to health care that empowers and equips people to take charge of their health and well-being, and live their life to the fullest.

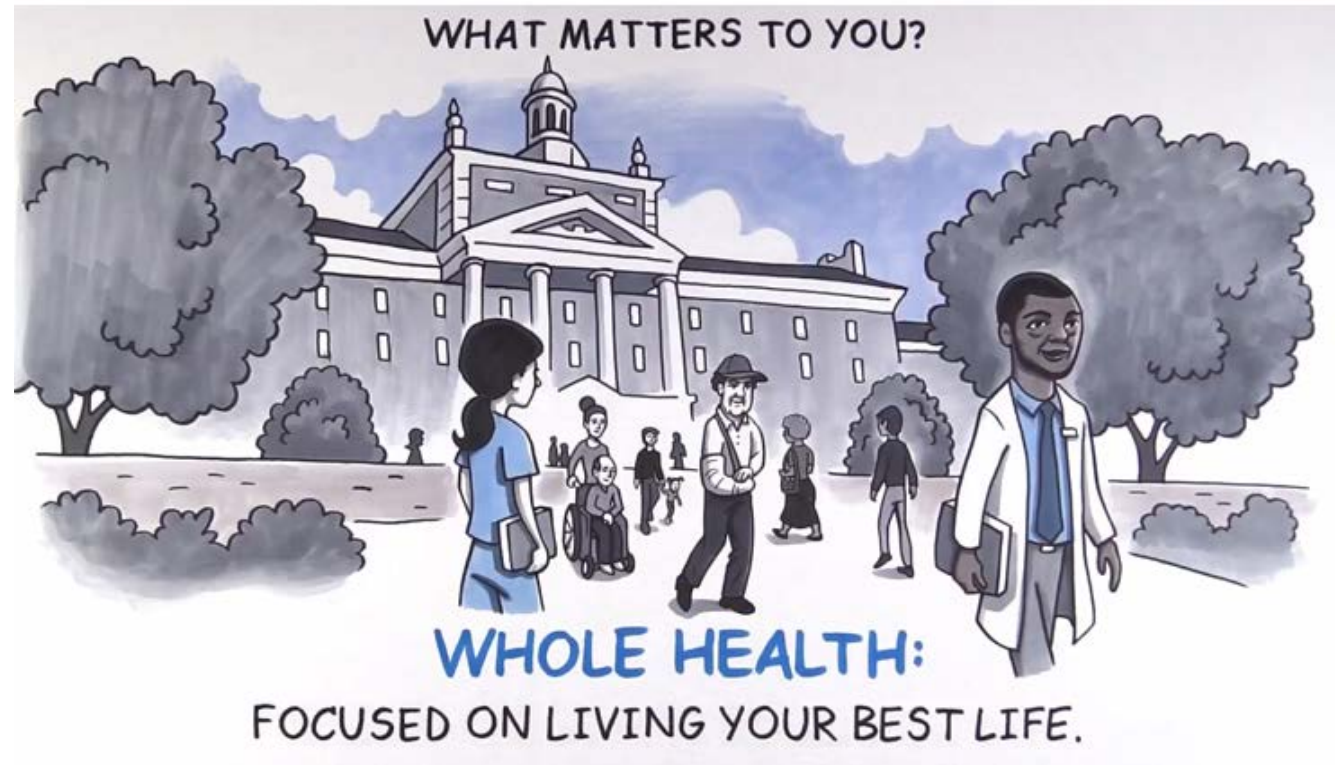


What's the matter
with you?



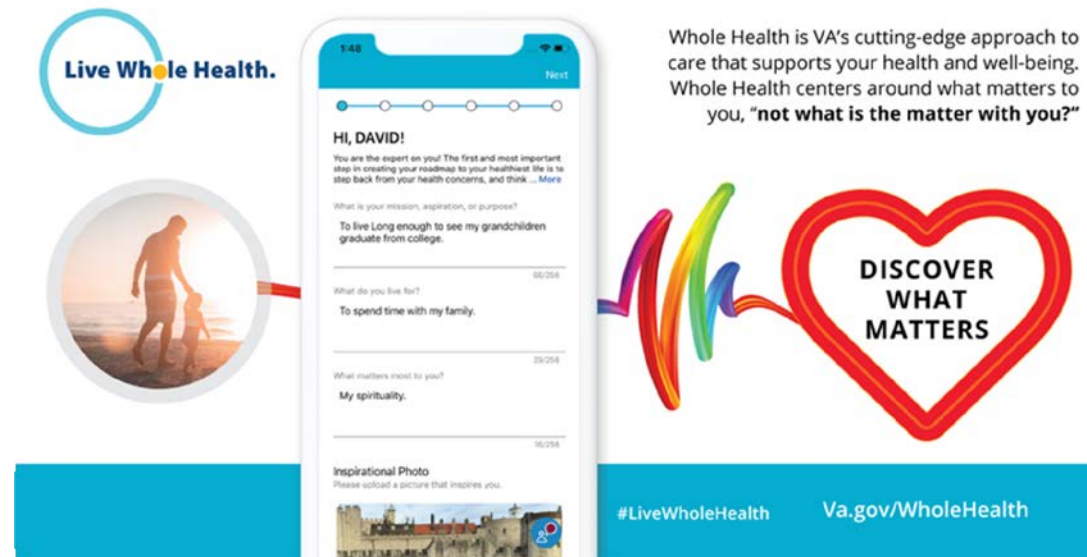
What matters
to you?

Bringing Whole Health to Life



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgNzmQBGeHU>

Live Whole Health Mobile App (NEW!)



- Designed for Veterans to develop a personal health strategy improving overall health and well-being.
- Guides the user through a Personal Health Inventory and helps create relevant SMART goals with actionable steps to achieve goals.
- #LiveWholeHealth & download the app today.





**DISCOVER
WHAT MATTERS**
.... *to*
YOU

Live Whole Health.

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ment of Veterans Affairs
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**DISCOVER WHAT MATTERS
TO YOU**

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Whole Health Outreach Toolkit

VA » Health Care » Whole Health » Get Involved » Whole Health Outreach Toolkit

Whole Health

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Home

▼ Get Involved

Get Started

Get Healthy

Outreach Toolkit

Support Whole Health

▶ Veteran Resources

▶ Professional Resources

▶ Circle of Health

Build Your Personal Health Plan

▶ More Health Care

QUICK LINKS

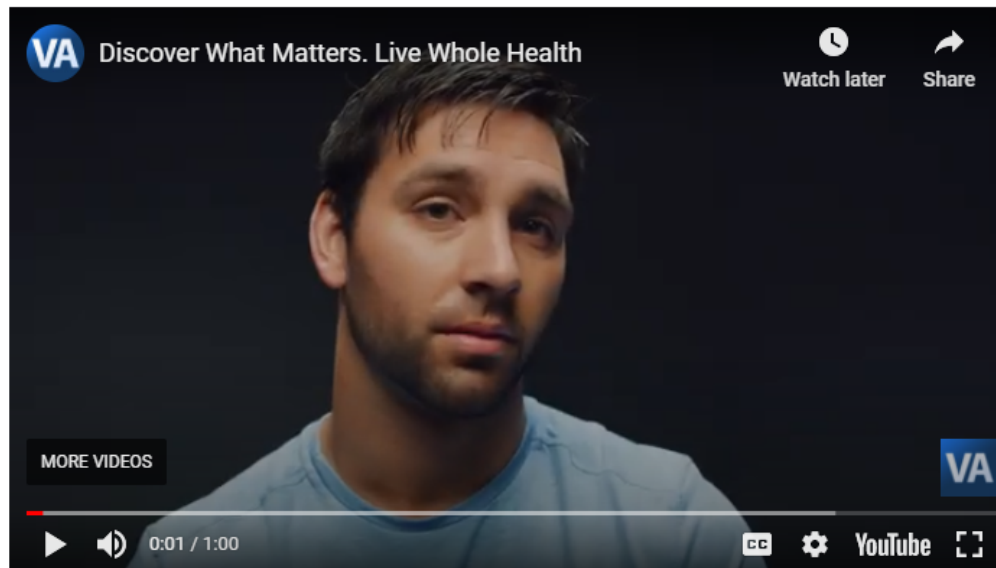
 Hospital Locator

 Health Programs

 Protect Your Health

 A-Z Health Topics

Whole Health Outreach Toolkit



Please feel free to download, post, and share "Discover What Matters." To download these videos, click on the "Video" bar below and select the version you want to download.

60-second video

30-second video

15-second video

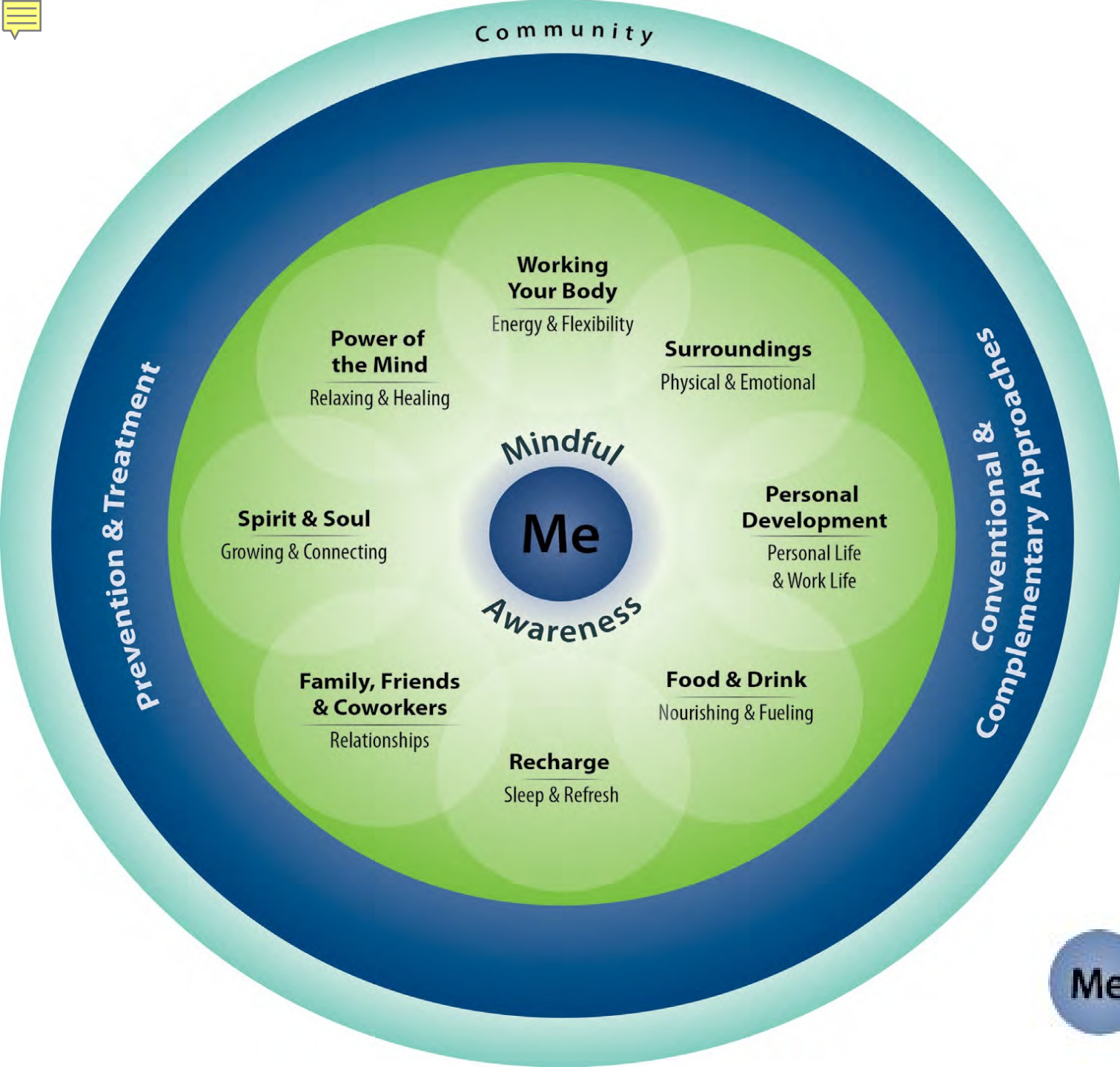
This Patient-Centered Care Month, we are focusing on getting the word out about VA's Whole Health approach. Our new "Discover What Matters" outreach video highlights how Whole Health puts Veterans at the center of their care, helping them make more informed decisions, adopt healthy behaviors, have positive patient encounters, and achieve better health outcomes. You can read more about the creation of this video in our [featured stories](#).

Live Whole Health.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration



Circle of Health

Components of
Proactive Health
 and Well-being



The Veteran Perspective

[Redesigning Health Care to Promote One's Whole Health:](#) An Overview of the Whole Health System

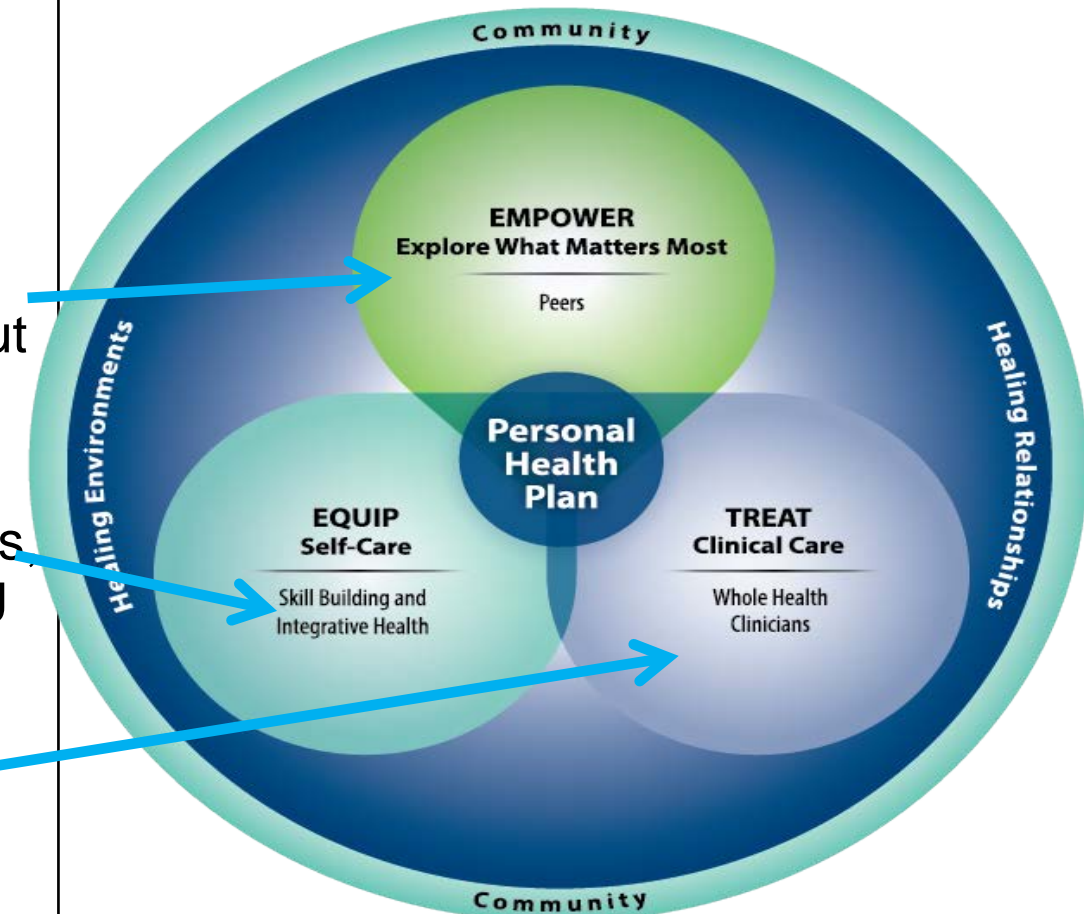
[Whole Health Comes to Life:](#) An animated motion story depicting the Whole Health journey of Veterans.

[The Pathway to Whole Health:](#) A look at peers reaching out to Veterans across the country and the impact it has.

[Skill Building to Promote Wellbeing:](#) Hearing from Veterans leaders and staff across VA, who benefit from skill building and support in their self-care.

[The Whole Health Approach to Clinical Care:](#) Clinicians and Veterans share how this approach to clinical care has impacted them.

The Whole Health System

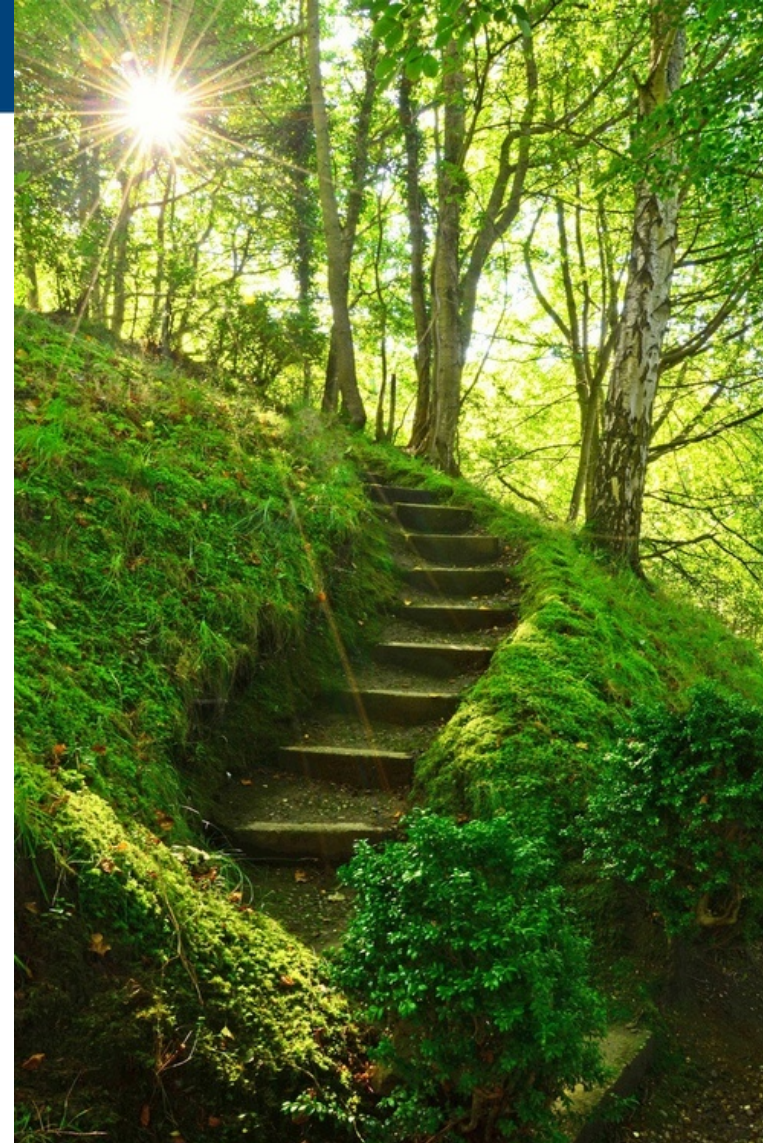


Pathway

Peers

Don't walk behind me; I may not lead. Don't walk in front of me; I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend.

-Albert Camus



Phoenix VA Whole Health Peer Facilitator



Phoenix VA Whole Health with Tonya Kittrell (6:16)

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhLIUUWMGzw&feature=youtu.be>)

Well-Being Programs



- Skill-Building Classes
- Health Coaching
- Complementary/ Integrative Health therapies

#LiveWholeHealth Self Care Resources for Veterans

#LiveWholeHealth tag and well-being blog

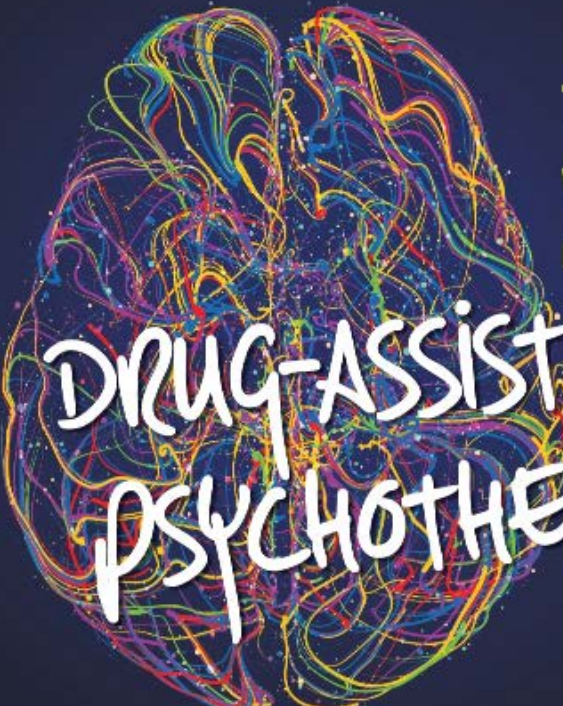
<https://www.blogs.va.gov/Vantage/category/health/livewholehealth/>

The image displays a grid of 12 blog post thumbnails from the #LiveWholeHealth series. Each thumbnail includes a title, a date, a time, a contributor name, and a view count. The posts cover various self-care topics such as mindfulness, meditation, Tai Chi, breathing exercises, gratitude, and music. Each post also features a 'Read More' button and a list of relevant tags.

- MINDFUL BODY SCAN**
Live Whole Health: Self-care episode #40 – Mindful Body Scan
Wednesday, July 22, 2020 4:00 pm #LiveWholeHealth Vantage Point Contributor
1k views
A mindful body scan makes us aware of how our body is being and bring us into the present moment. This is ...
#LiveWholeHealth Guided Meditation meditation mindful body scan self care
[Read More](#)
- SOFT BELLY BREATHING**
Live Whole Health: Self-care episode #37 – Soft Belly Breathing
Monday, July 13, 2020 4:00 pm #LiveWholeHealth Vantage Point Contributor
1 comment 1k views
There are many ways the mind can affect the physical body. Soft Belly Breathing can bring a sense of ...
#LiveWholeHealth Guided Meditation meditation self care soft
[Read More](#)
- TAI CHI**
Live Whole Health: Self-care episode #35 – Tai chi
Monday, July 6, 2020 4:00 pm #LiveWholeHealth Vantage Point Contributor
4 comments 2k views
Tai Chi is a form of gentle movement that can improve muscle strength, flexibility, balance, and stress ...
#LiveWholeHealth Guided Meditation meditation Tai Chi
[Read More](#)
- SCHEDULING PLEASANT ACTIVITIES**
Live Whole Health self-care episode #32 – Scheduling Pleasant Activities
Wednesday, June 24, 2020 4:00 pm #LiveWholeHealth Vantage Point Contributor
563 views
It's important to schedule time for the things you enjoy. Consider neurotransmitters and hormones: they ...
#LiveWholeHealth Guided Meditation happiness meditation pleasure
[Read More](#)
- LOVING KINDNESS PRACTICE**
Live Whole Health: Self-care episode #2
Tuesday, April 7, 2020 4:00 pm #LiveWholeHealth Health Vantage Point Contributor
7k views
Meditation is a tool that can cultivate present moment attention and awareness, allowing us to take steps ...
#LiveWholeHealth Loving Kindness meditation self care
[Read More](#)
- ARE YOU LISTENING?**
Live Whole Health: Self-care episode #42 – Are You Listening?
Monday, August 3, 2020 4:00 pm #LiveWholeHealth Vantage Point Contributor
35 views
Studies indicate that we spend 30-90% of our waking hours in communication, and almost half of that time ...
#LiveWholeHealth outstanding mindfulness mindful awareness mindful breathing mindfulness meditation
[Read More](#)
- GRATITUDE PRACTICE**
Live Whole Health: Self-care episode #30 – Gratitude practice
Monday, July 20, 2020 4:00 pm #LiveWholeHealth Vantage Point Contributor
1k views
Facing adversity is a natural part of the human experience. When situations arise and we find ourselves ...
#LiveWholeHealth gratitude practice guided meditation meditation self care
[Read More](#)
- BREATHING IN THE MOMENT**
Live Whole Health: Self-care episode #34 – Breathing in the Moment
Wednesday, July 1, 2020 5:30 pm #LiveWholeHealth Vantage Point Contributor
1k views
You can only take a breath in the present moment; not the past and not the future. Mindful awareness ...
#LiveWholeHealth Breathing breathing exercises mindful breath
[Read More](#)
- BREATHING FOR STRESS RELIEF**
Live Whole Health: Self-care episode #41 – Breathing for stress relief
Monday, July 27, 2020 4:00 pm #LiveWholeHealth Vantage Point Contributor
751 views
Breath—something we do 20,000 times a day—is one of the body's most important functions, and one that we ...
#LiveWholeHealth Benefits of quitting smoking Breathing breathing exercises how to quit smoking mind quit smoking self care Smoke Free Smokefree4mat smoking cessation stress relief
[Read More](#)
- BEING GRATEFUL FOR YOUR BODY**
Live Whole Health Self-care episode #36 – Being Grateful for Your Body
Wednesday, July 8, 2020 4:00 pm #LiveWholeHealth Vantage Point Contributor
1k views
Injuries, inflammation, the passage of time, and lifestyle choices change our bodies. How we think of our ...
#LiveWholeHealth Guided Meditation meditation self care
[Read More](#)
- THE GUEST HOUSE**
Live Whole Health: Self-care episode #33 – The Guest House
Friday, June 26, 2020 4:00 pm #LiveWholeHealth Vantage Point Contributor
1k views
The poem, 'The Guest House,' by the 13th century poet, Rumi, is used often in mindfulness practice. In this ...
#LiveWholeHealth Guided Meditation Guided Relaxation meditati
[Read More](#)
- MUSIC & MOVEMENT**
Live Whole Health: Self-care episode #31 – Music and Movement
Tuesday, June 16, 2020 2:00 pm #LiveWholeHealth Vantage Point Contributor
1k views
Music moves people – in more ways than one. It makes people forget the actual work in a workout and leads ...
#LiveWholeHealth Guided Meditation health benefits of music meditation
[Read More](#)
- DISCOVER WHAT MATTERS TO YOU**
Live Whole Health: Self-care episode #1
Monday, April 6, 2020 2:00 pm #LiveWholeHealth Health Vantage Point Contributor
14k views
With the unforeseen challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, how we deal with and adapt to change will determine ...
#LiveWholeHealth Guided Meditation Whole Health
[Read More](#)

THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF DAV AND AUXILIARY
MAY | JUNE 2020

DAV MAGAZINE




This is your brain on drugs

DRUG-ASSISTED PSYCHOTHERAPY

A common street drug may be key in the fight against PTSD.

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1920  2020

A Century of Service to Veterans

DAV.ORG | DAV | @DAVHQ | #DAVHQ | COMPANY/DAVHQ | DISABLEDVETERANS

Body, mind and spirit

VA alternative therapies result in major successes

By Ashleigh Byrnes

DAV Past National Commander and Marine Corps veteran Brad Barton was injured during the siege of Khe Sanh in 1968. Halfway through the 77-day battle, a North Vietnamese mortar round exploded outside his tent, sending shrapnel through his back and severing his spinal cord. He has been in a wheelchair ever since.

"It was a major adjustment, but what helped me through the whole experience was the fact that I was so lucky and so grateful that I had survived my injuries," said Barton. "So I was highly motivated when I returned through the hospital system and went through rehabilitation to get back some normalcy in my life."

Barton has seen, as he says, "the best and the worst of [the] VA" over the years. Much of the system has changed since his injury—from a time when there was only a single type of wheelchair available to now, when disabled veterans have a wealth of customized and durable medical equipment, devices and prostheses.

But there is another tool in the VA's arsenal that's proving to be just as valuable. In 2018, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced it would be designating 18 facilities as Whole Health Flagship sites, signaling a shift from a health care system focused mainly on disease and injury treatment to one that addresses veterans' physical, mental, spiritual and environmental needs. The program includes things like acupuncture,

yoga and tai chi, massage therapy, clinical hypnosis and biofeedback, all available to veterans as part of their personalized health plan.

As part of this program, Barton enrolled in an eight-week mindfulness training program in which he was led through guided meditation, focusing on pain he was experiencing and tuning in to how his body was reacting.

"I remember after the first session, I woke up in the middle of the night and my hip was killing me. But instead of letting it disrupt my sleep, I said, 'OK, where's the pain at? How bad is it?'" said Barton. "And I fell right back to sleep. It didn't really disrupt my sleep at all. It was totally unbelievable to me."

Barton's experience is not a fluke, but rather one promising anecdote about how the VA's Whole Health program is helping veterans better manage pain and reduce reliance on medication alone.

"The data supports a threefold reduction in opioid use among veterans with chronic pain who used Whole Health services compared with those who did not," said Heather Malecki, director of integrative health and wellness at the Washington, D.C., VA Medical Center—one of the original flagship locations.

A VA report released in January noted that, among comprehensive Whole Health users—classified as patients who went to eight or more whole health visits—opioid use decreased 38% compared with the 11% increase among those who did not use Whole Health. According to the VA, veterans are twice as

likely to die from accidental overdoses compared to the general U.S. population.

"Nobody is saying we're going to fix it, we're going to eliminate all pain, we're going to eliminate all mental health concerns, we're going to eliminate all chronic conditions," said Malecki. "It's reframing the way patients view their own pain experience and giving them a bigger toolbox to manage it."

And better pain management isn't the only benefit of the program. Many of the veterans in the VA's Whole Health program report weight loss and improved mental health as well as better vital signs and diagnostic test results.

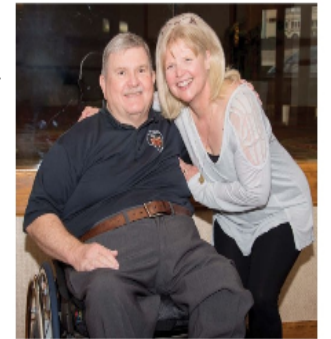
Marine Corps veteran John Pearson is a former cancer patient who was exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam. He has been taking tai chi classes regularly through the D.C. VAMC and says the program has drastically improved his overall health.

"When they told me my blood pressure was 104 over 56, I almost fell out of the chair," said Pearson. "My kidney function has improved, too, and my A1C is now at 7, down from a 12. I realized if I want to live, I've got to do this."

Whole Health has also shown significant success in helping to reduce outpatient pharmacy costs by 9% annually for those with mental health conditions and 11.5% each year for those with chronic pain.

"We understand some people are skeptical about whether or not these alternative approaches can really help reduce their pain," said Deputy National Legislative Director Adrian Atizado. "But especially for those veterans who may carry a higher risk for opioid addiction, like combat veterans, we have to use every tool in the arsenal, and this approach seems to be working."

Malecki said the VA expects 44% of veterans with chronic pain to engage in Whole Health services by the end of 2020, an indication that veterans are not just



DAV Past National Commander Brad Barton, pictured with wife Dawn, suffered a spinal cord injury in Vietnam in 1968. Today, he utilizes the VA's Whole Health program to manage pain and improve his overall physical and mental wellness.

seeing the benefits but are sharing their experiences with others.

"We do a 'Taking Charge of My Life and Health' group where the veterans help each other make goals," said Army veteran Kathy Bixby, a Whole Health nurse educator at the D.C. VAMC. "They have a week or two in between to come back and talk about how they succeeded or what were the barriers. So really, they're paying attention to what they want their health for, and they're recognizing an opportunity to make change."

"We're giving them skills to be able to know how to do that and be successful," said Bixby, who herself lost 50 pounds thanks to her experience with the program. "And they're getting to talk about it among their peers. It's really very powerful!" ■

“The data supports a **threefold reduction in opioid use** among veterans with chronic pain who used Whole Health services compared with those who did not.”

—Heather Malecki, director of integrative health and wellness, Washington, D.C., VA Medical Center

The Voices of Veterans

Whole Health began my journey to joy, I am a changed person. I no longer need my cane. The Whole Health group has become my family. My neurologist says he doesn't need to see me anymore!"

J.H., 52 year old male

"I love Whole Health and I have lost 50 pounds! My wife was worried about me because I was not getting out of the house enough. I am more active. I learned how to cook healthy and am exercising every day. Yoga is a godsend, I don't have the pain in the way I used to have and my pain meds have decreased. My back is much better from Tai Chi, I'm getting my list done, I'm getting organized. No longer am I sitting at home and dwelling in my own misery."

K.D., 48 year old male

I used to drive over the Mississippi River Bridge, to Jefferson Barracks VA, and think about jumping every time. The whole health system has helped me explore my purpose, find ways to use nutrition to reduce my pain, and use iRest and Tai Chi to get moving again. Now I drive over that bridge and think about tomorrow.... I have hope"

K. H., 37 year old Female

**Now, we can help Veterans be mission ready
for their lives, optimizing their health in
service of what matters to them.**

**How Will We Identify
Success?
When Veterans achieve
outcomes they never even
imagined.**

VHA Office of Patient Centered Care & Cultural Transformation

Mission: Transform health care to a Whole Health System of care to support the health and well-being of Veterans, VA employees and the nation.

Overarching Domains:

- Whole Health System Evolution & Sustainment
- **National and Community Engagement**
- Organizational Excellence

Outreach & Strategic Partnerships

- **Call to Action/Outreach Videos**
- **Ready to use social media content and Communications resources**
- **Whole Health Collaboration with Veterans Service Organizations**
 - VHA/VA VSO liaison offices; VA Voluntary Service (VAVS)
 - Wounded Warrior Project Health and Well-Being Expos
 - VFW and American Legion National Conventions
 - National Games/Events (Summer Sports Clinic); Golden Age Games; others
 - MANY opportunities!
- **VA Voluntary Service** – National Advisory Committee; New Whole Health Community Ambassador role developed; MANY opportunities!
- **Veteran Outreach & Integration**
 - Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) and Community Partnerships
 - Transitioning Service Members, DoD, and Military Partnership Growth

Whole Health Outreach

Ronald Rutherford, MSHM, Whole Health Outreach Lead

- 26 year Navy Veteran
- Retired 2011 as a Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman
- Joined VA in 2011 as a Whole Health Field Consultant
- Passion for serving Veterans
- Passion for nature, and enjoys hunting, fishing, and more!



Ronald.Rutherford@va.gov

(412) 328-5997

OPCC&CT Communications Team

- Nancy Donovan, Associate Director, Communications & Strategic Partnerships
- Andrew Ruben, Communications Specialist
- Devra Merriweather, Health Systems Specialist

- VHA OPCCCT Communications Team:
VHAOPCCCTCommunications@va.gov

Additional Background

Whole Health Home (va.gov)

www.va.gov/WHOLE HEALTH

- Veteran Resources
- Circle of Health Resources
- Professional Resources
- Whole Health Library
- More!

Whole Health Library

Advancing Skills in the Delivery of Personalized, Proactive, and Patient-Driven Care

This website was created for clinicians who work with Veterans and these resources can support everyone in their journey toward optimal health.

Whole Health Library

- Whole Health Library
- Whole Health Library Home
- About
- Get Started
- Implementation
- Self-Care
- Professional Care
- Tools
- Courses
- Veteran Handouts
- More Health Care



Whole Health focuses on what matters most to each of us. It empowers people through mindful awareness and self-care, recognizing the fundamental importance of healthy nutrition, activity, sleep, relationships, surroundings, and the many other areas of our lives that contribute to our health and wholeness.

Whole Health supports patient-centered, proactive, whole-person care. Conventional testing and treatment are combined with complementary and integrative health strategies such as yoga, tai chi, and acupuncture. This website was created for clinicians who work with Veterans, but our resources can support everyone in their journey toward optimal health.

- ✓ “Professional-Care” provides peer-reviewed overviews on using CIH approaches and current research for specific conditions, such as men’s health, endocrine health, and cancer care.
- ✓ The “Implementation” tab has 5 overviews presenting evidence-based approaches to implement Whole Health in your personal and professional life.
- ✓ The “Self-Care” tab has overviews that join the latest research findings to the eight areas of self-care and mindful awareness.
- ✓ The “Tools” section includes multiple resources clinicians use at the point of care. Tools go into additional details about topics that are covered more generally in the overviews.
- ✓ Under the “VA Courses” tab, you will find manuals, PowerPoints, and additional materials for various Whole Health course offerings.
- ✓ There are 8 skill-building courses for Veterans, one for each area of self-care in the Circle of Health. Content includes slides, participant handouts, and a faculty guide for each course.

Live Whole Health.

<https://www.va.gov/wholehealthlibrary/>

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration

Whole Health for Women Veterans



Whole Health for Women Veterans (1:42)
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxXWf4fLbhQ>)

Whole Health: Success Stories



Whole Health: Success Stories (1:37)

(<https://youtu.be/khRSZ0VcePM>)

Live Whole Health.

Personal Health Inventory

Personal Health Inventory (PHI)

[Making Your Plan - Whole Health \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov/makingyourplan-wholehealth/)

- [Personal Health Inventory](#) (PDF tool that can be printed)



Personal Health Inventory



Whole Health Communication Resources

- Monthly Whole Health Communications Plan
- Whole Health App
- Whole Health Doses (Series for clinicians)
- Whole Health Peer Facilitator Recognition Day – November 18, 2020
- Live Whole Health Paid Advertising pilot (concluded Veterans Day 2020)
- Print Products
- New! Videos
- #LiveWholeHealth VAntage Point Blog Series