

# Whole Health: The Basics

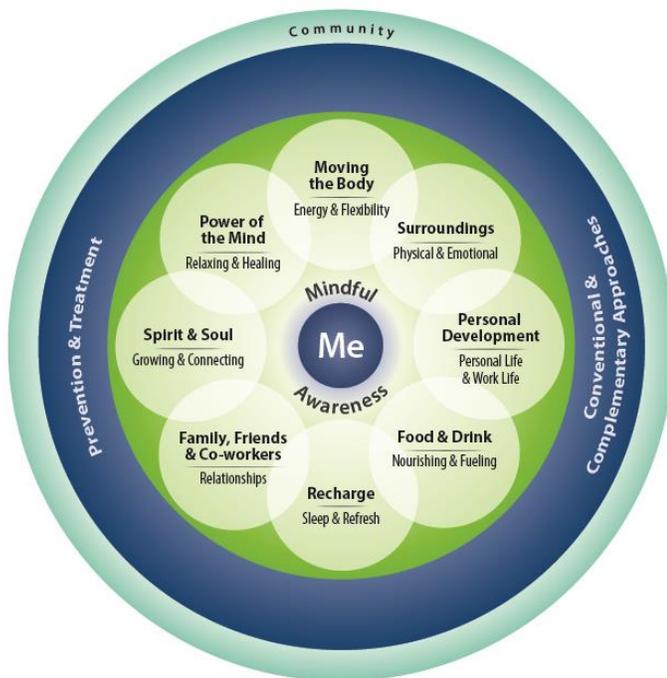
*Whole Health is VA’s cutting-edge approach to care that supports the Veteran’s health and well-being. Whole Health centers around **what matters to you**, not what is the matter with you. This means the health team gets to know each Veteran as a person before developing a personalized health plan based on the Veteran’s values, needs, and goals. It is an approach to health care that empowers and equips people to take charge of their health and well-being and live life to the fullest.*

## Mission, Aspiration, and Purpose

Whole Health starts with the Veteran’s MAP: their mission, aspiration, and/or purpose. This MAP provides direction for all interventions and recommendations. In other words, Whole Health personal health plans focus on “mapping to the MAP.”

## Circle of Health

Whole Health is best understood by reviewing the [Circle of Health](#). As seen here:



- The Veteran is at the center with their individual MAP
- [Mindful Awareness](#) allows Veterans to think about and attend to what matters most to them
- The eight areas of self-care help us consider various aspects of health and well-being, including strengths and challenges
- Health care expands to include complementary approaches and to focus on skill-building for self-care
- All healing takes place in a community

## Personal Health Inventory

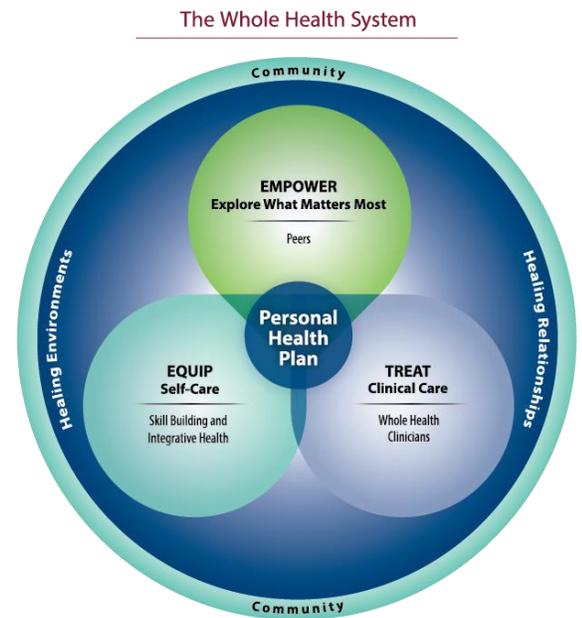
The [Personal Health Inventory](#) is a Whole Health assessment tool that assists Veterans with reflecting on their MAP, assessing each area of self-care, and considering how they may inform the plan. There is also a [brief PHI](#).



## The Whole Health System

The [Whole Health System](#) of Care includes three major components:

1. **Empower:** The “Pathway” is where Peer Partners empower Veterans to discover their MAP and begin developing an overarching personal health plan.
2. **Equip:** Well-being programs are where Veterans are taught to engage in self-care through skill-building classes, learn about CIH services such as yoga and tai chi, and work with a health coach to discuss progress towards their goals and how to overcome barriers.
3. **Treat:** Whole Health Clinical Care is done in both inpatient and outpatient settings and provides treatment within a Whole Health paradigm. This includes orienting services around the Veteran’s MAP and partnering with them to determine the services—both conventional and CIH—that they want to use.



### Personal Health Planning

The Veteran’s [PHP](#) brings together the support, skill-building classes, and care provided across the Whole Health System while “mapping to the map” of what is most important to the Veteran and their goals. Creating a PHP includes four components:

1. Self-reflection/Exploration (MAP)
2. Whole Health Assessment (e.g., PHI)
3. Goal-setting with shared SMART goals
4. Education, skill-building, resources, and support

### Complementary Integrative Health

[Complementary and Integrative Health](#) (CIH) services are integral to supporting health and well-being. List 1 approaches, below, have substantial research backing and are required offerings at every VA or to Veterans through the community. List 2 approaches may be offered. These include:

- |                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Acupuncture     | 5. Meditation        |
| 2. Massage therapy | 6. Guided Imagery    |
| 3. Tai Chi/Qigong  | 7. Biofeedback       |
| 4. Yoga            | 8. Clinical Hypnosis |

### Learn More

To learn more about Whole Health, explore the following:

- [A Shift Towards Health](#), a 13-minute TED-talk style video that explains the reasoning behind the Whole Health approach
- [Fundamentals of Whole Health Clinical Care](#), a one-hour overview of the Whole Health System and using Whole Health in clinical care. This overview assumes you’ve watched [A Shift Towards Health](#)
- [Passport to Whole Health](#), a reference book and deep dive into Whole Health. The first several chapters provide an excellent introduction to Whole Health
- Contact your [FIT Consultant](#), your site’s liaison from the Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation
- Explore the [Whole Health Library](#), a comprehensive Whole Health website including extensive information on integrating Whole Health in practice and on CIH approaches and research