

# LIVING WHOLE HEALTH

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Whole Health approach to care empowers, equips, and treats you so you can take charge of your health and well-being and live your life to the fullest.

It is about much more than medical visits. Whole Health connects you with other Veterans, puts you in control of your well-being, and changes lives.

Want to know more?



## MEET ROB

## Taking the Whole Health Pathway

When Rob came to the VA he was struggling with spinal cord trauma and memory loss related to traumatic brain injuries he suffered during his Navy service. He was unable to walk or talk well. "I was in constant pain all the time," he says. He managed daily life with a cycle of pain killers and numerous ice packs. He experienced weight gain and was told he would never regain full movement of his left foot.

Then VA adopted a new approach to care, it's called Whole Health. "It's just the way health care should be run," says Rob. Whole Health has empowered him and other Veterans to take charge of their care by asking what is important to them and offering options in addition to medication to address their challenges. You are treated as a whole person, not a whole list of symptoms.



# Focusing on Well-Being and Being Well

Whole Health encourages you to develop a Personal Health Plan, set goals based on what is important to you, and work toward those goals with your health team. Many plans include well-being approaches such as yoga, aquatic therapy, mindfulness meditation, acupuncture, or creative writing classes. The aim is to equip you with what you need to reach your goals.

Rob wanted to reduce his pain, regain movement, and lose weight. That's when a chiropractor recommended aquatic therapy. "I wanted to get back to even a quarter of the person I once was," Rob says. "I didn't want to just lay around the rest of my life. So, I said, 'I'll take it. I'll sign up.'"

He made it through his first 10-week aquatics class and signed up for another. Soon, he was back in the gym for workouts and was able to drop 85 pounds in a year. With the addition of yoga to his plan, he regained movement in his foot. His health and life improved. "I'm not pain-free, but I don't have the pain that I had before," he says. "I'm no longer packing myself in ice and I'm happy again."

## Involving Communities

VA is partnering with community and Veterans groups, nationally and locally, to raise awareness of Whole Health and how it is different than traditional approaches to care.

Rob is working with Veteran service organizations he is part of to spread the word to those who may not go to VA for care. He is also a Whole Health Peer Facilitator, teaching other Veterans and helping them take charge of their health. "Whole Health starts bringing you back to a quality of life that you forget that you can have," he says.

As more and more Veterans practice Whole Health, the word is spreading in their communities. Like Rob, they are inspiring others with their stories of how Whole Health has empowered, equipped, and treated them so they can live their lives to the fullest.

Learn more about the positive impacts of adopting Whole Health by watching videos on the Whole Health experiences of Veterans and providers:

[www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/resources/multimedia/index.asp](http://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/resources/multimedia/index.asp)

[www.va.gov/patientcenteredcare](http://www.va.gov/patientcenteredcare)

Attend a peer-led Introduction to Whole Health class at your local VA Medical Center to learn more.

For more information on Whole Health courses or Peer-Facilitator training go to [www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/veterans-teaching-veterans.asp](http://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/veterans-teaching-veterans.asp)



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