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## **Enhance Your Well-Being with the VA Wellness Guide**

### **Make every day count: A guide to wellness with VA**

The Veterans Wellness Guide provides brief explanations, strategies and activities that Veterans can use at home to improve their well-being

You may have heard about how important it is to have a sense of well-being. You may know that it can affect both physical and mental health. But do you know how Veterans can achieve it? Educators from the [VISN 16 South Central MIRECC](#) in Houston have developed a new tool to take the mystery out of being well.

The [Veterans Wellness Guide](#) provides brief explanations, strategies and activities that Veterans can use at home to improve their well-being. The guide isn't meant to replace professional care. If Veterans experience signs and symptoms of mental health challenges, they should always [contact VA](#) for professional evaluation and treatment, if necessary.

Veterans receiving care can work with their practitioner to incorporate information and practices in the guide into their treatment plan.

### **Applying the science of positive psychology**

A team of VA educators developed the guide. Each section was created to stand alone. Veterans can use as many sections and activities as they like and in whatever order they prefer.

Topics include:

- Self-compassion
- Presence of mind
- Managing thoughts
- Setting goals

- Perseverance and positive thinking
- Kindness and gratitude
- Time management
- Exercise
- Meditation and breathing
- Relaxation
- Humor
- Sleep
- Stress
- Healthy eating

The guide is rooted in positive psychology. It takes a scientific approach to improving a person's quality of life. Veterans have shown improvements in their relationships, energy levels, physical self-care and sleep after participating in wellness programs that incorporate positive psychology techniques. Research has found that self-guided positive psychology can decrease the symptoms of mental illnesses, such as depression, and promote overall well-being.

### **Proven success among Veterans**

In its development stage, the Veterans Wellness Guide's pilot tested with Veterans whose feedback was used to improve both content and design. The pilot users reported that the finished guide was highly useful. They said they needed the information and would recommend the guide to fellow Veterans.

Those interested in using the [Veterans Wellness Guide](#) can download it and put it into practice in their homes at their own pace and on their own terms. Veterans who wish to involve their loved ones in their wellness journey can share the guide with family members and friends.

### **Accessing the guide**

To learn about the importance of well-being to overall mental health and to find wellness practices that can help achieve it, download the [Veterans Wellness Guide](#) through the VISN 16 South Central MIRECC, at [www.mirecc.va.gov/VISN16/docs/veteran-wellness-guide.pdf](http://www.mirecc.va.gov/VISN16/docs/veteran-wellness-guide.pdf).

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