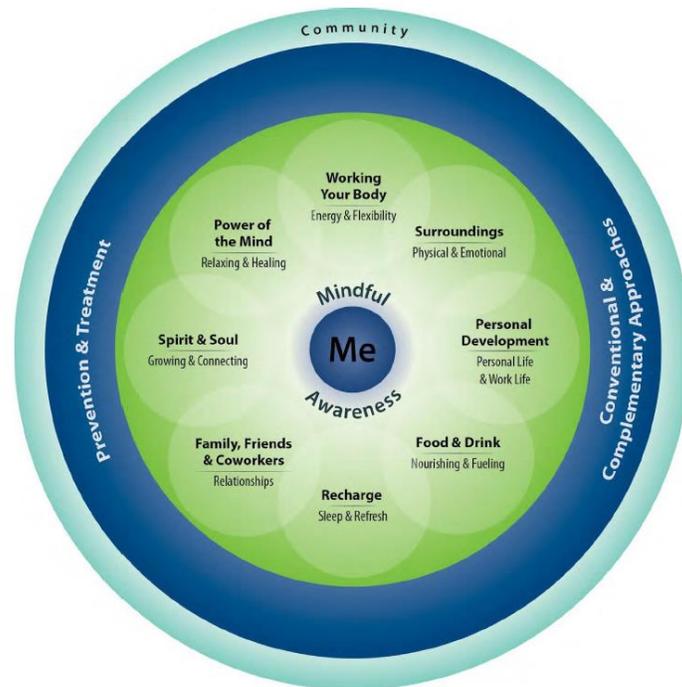


# WHOLE HEALTH: CHANGE THE CONVERSATION

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

## The PLISSIT Model Clinical Tool



This document has been written for clinicians. The content was developed by the Integrative Medicine Program, Department of Family Medicine, University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health in cooperation with Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, under contract to the Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation, Veterans Health Administration.

Information is organized according to the diagram above, the *Components of Proactive Health and Well-Being*. While conventional treatments may be covered to some degree, the focus is on other areas of Whole Health that are less likely to be covered elsewhere and may be less familiar to most readers. There is no intention to dismiss what conventional care has to offer. Rather, you are encouraged to learn more about other approaches and how they may be used to complement conventional care. The ultimate decision to use a given approach should be based on many factors, including patient preferences, clinician comfort level, efficacy data, safety, and accessibility. No one approach is right for everyone; personalizing care is of fundamental importance.

# **WHOLE HEALTH: CHANGE THE CONVERSATION**

## **The *PLISSIT* Model**

### **Clinical Tool**

PLISSIT is an acronym for **P**ermission, **L**imited Information, **S**pecific Suggestions, and **I**ntensive Therapy, a model developed by psychologist Jack Annon to address sexuality issues with patients.<sup>1</sup> This model can be adapted for other healthcare situations as well. You may find it helpful to keep the model in mind as you work with a patient to develop a Personal Health Plan.

The model includes four levels of intervention, ranging from basic to complex. It guides clinicians to support patients according to the unique needs of individual patients as well as the clinician's own comfort level and expertise. Referrals can be made when a patient's needs exceed a clinician's comfort, knowledge, and time.

- **Permission**  
The first level of intervention involves giving permission to or asking permission from your patients—permission to discuss feelings and concerns related to a specific health issue that they may be hesitant to discuss. By encouraging patients to share their thoughts, questions, and concerns, you validate the issue as a legitimate health matter and help to build a trusting relationship. This may help empower patients to take a more active role in the promotion of their health. At this level, you may also offer permission by reassuring patients that an action they are either doing or plan to do is an appropriate course of action for their situation.
- **Limited Information**  
Limited information will be helpful to other patients. This second level of intervention goes beyond permission to provide basic education about the topic at hand. It requires some knowledge about the specific topic to answer patients' questions and dispel misconceptions. Factual information in patient handouts and a list of resources (e.g., holistic practitioners) may be helpful.
- **Specific Suggestions**  
Fewer patients will require specific suggestions. This level of intervention involves advanced knowledge of a particular health issue and skill to assess a patient's unique situation related to this health issue and to develop a plan. Clinician and patient can discuss the patient's concerns and experience more thoroughly, collaboratively identify issues to be addressed, problem-solve, and choose helpful strategies. Depending on your time, knowledge, and comfort level with the issue, you may decide to refer a patient in need of this level of intervention to another clinician/holistic practitioner or schedule another appointment for the patient to see you again.
- **Intensive Therapy**  
A minority of patients will require intensive therapy for a particular issue. This fourth level of intervention may require referral to a specialist.

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Clinical Tool: The *PLISSIT* Model

**Whole Health: Change the Conversation Website**

Interested in learning more about Whole Health?  
Browse our website for information on personal and professional care.

<http://projects.hsl.wisc.edu/SERVICE/index.php>

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**References**

1. Annon JS. *Behavioral Treatment of Sexual Problems: Brief Therapy*. Oxford, England: Harper & Row; 1976.