



This program is sponsored by the International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders. The views and opinions expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the official position of IFFGD. Information and resources shared should not replace any medical care you are receiving. Finally, it is important to always consult with your doctor or other health care provider before making decisions about your treatment.

The following slides were presented during the educational portion of IFFGD's 2020 Virtual Advocacy Event. To view this presentation and the all videos available during this program, please visit [https://bit.ly/Adv\\_Edu](https://bit.ly/Adv_Edu).



2020 Virtual Advocacy Event

# How to Create Your Health Care Team

Lorren Sandt

Caring Ambassadors Program

*Empowering people to be ambassadors for their own health since 1997*

Be Active. Be Heard. Make a Difference.

***Imagine*** if  
your chronic health  
condition were actually  
an opportunity to live a  
healthier, more  
meaningful life...



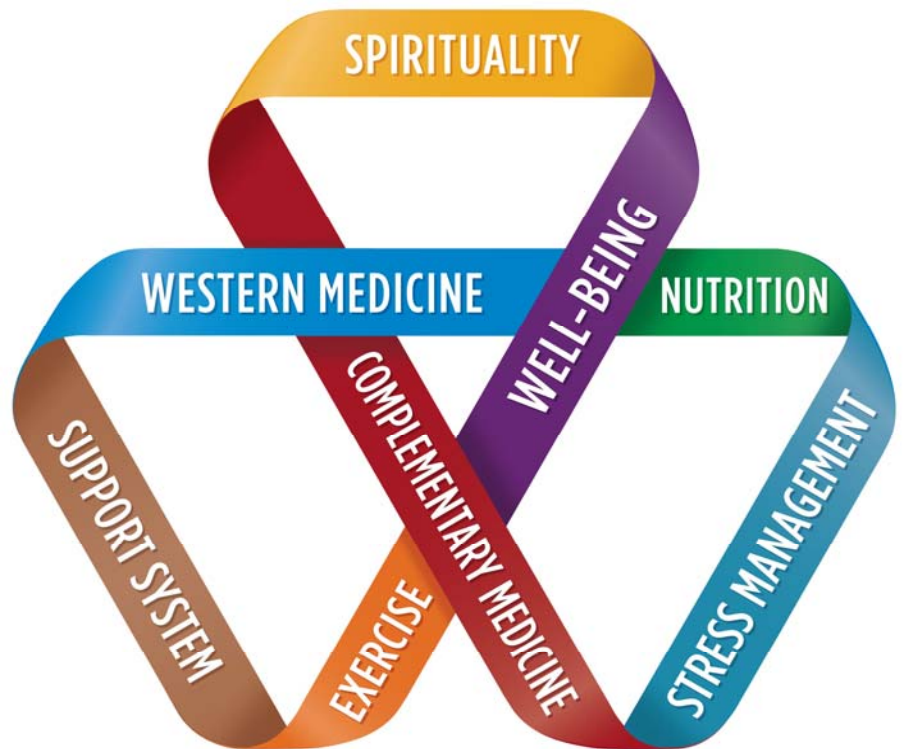
Be Active. Be Heard. Make a Difference.



***Imagine*** that  
you could put together a  
health care team  
comprised of the best  
medical doctors and  
health care practitioners,  
with you at the center...



***Imagine*** that  
you knew the best  
treatments from all  
areas of health care and  
were committed to  
maintaining them....



***Imagine*** that  
you were working on  
building a solid support  
system, managing  
stress, following the best  
nutritional guidance,  
nurturing your  
spirituality and mental  
and emotional health...



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*How much better off do you  
think you'd be?*

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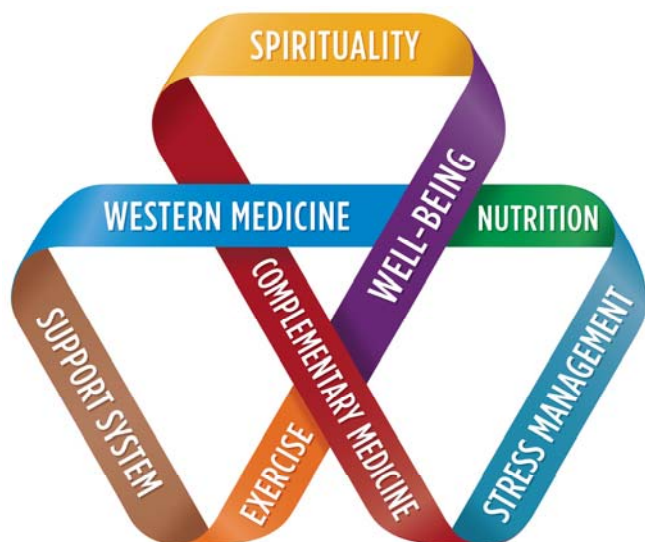


*Most people spend more time looking for  
their next car than they do looking for  
their doctor.      -Cleveland Clinic*





# Build an Integrative Health Care Team



- Which aspect(s) of my health care do I need or want to address?
- What professionals or expert practitioners exist to help me address these health care needs?
- How do I locate them? What are the organizations that credential this type of provider/practitioner?

***“The integrative approach utilizes all appropriate, evidence based and personalized therapeutic approaches to achieve optimal health and well-being across one’s lifespan.”***

— The Bravewell Collaborative

# Heal or Healing:

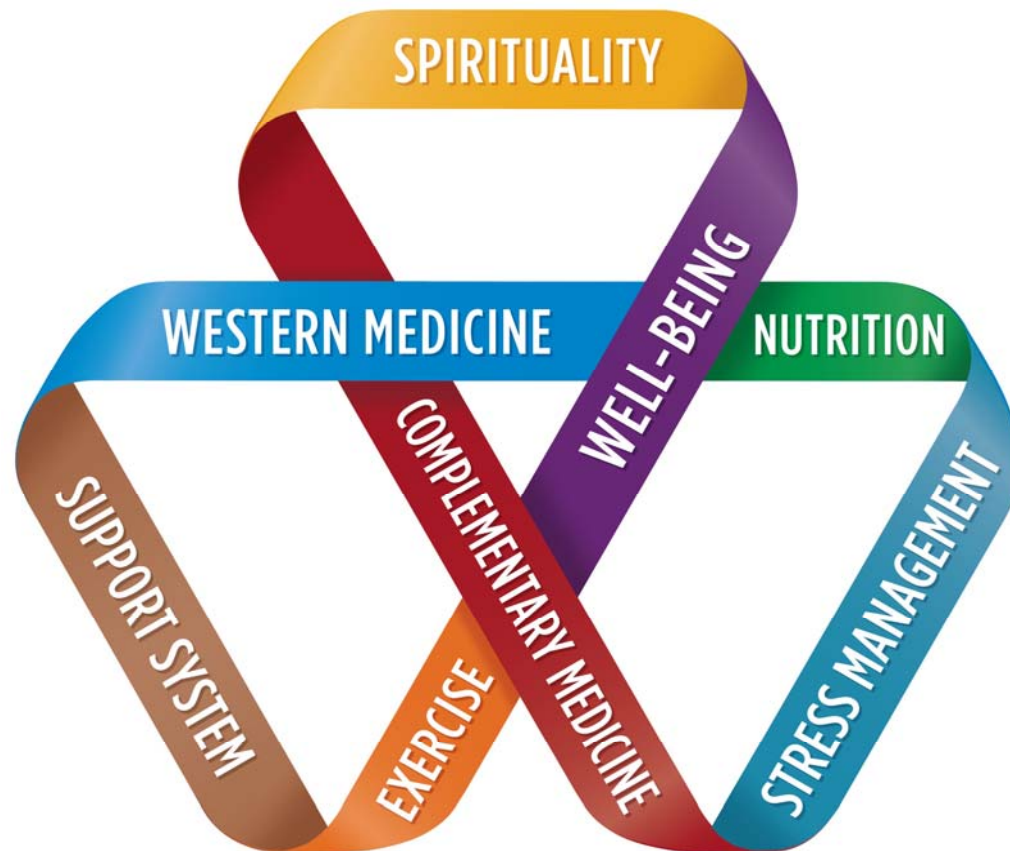
There is no standard definition for 'heal' or 'healing', and the act of healing – whether from a chronic health condition or another transformative life event – will look different for everyone.

The Caring Ambassadors defines 'healing' as a process of restoration to a state of wholeness and fulfilment; physical healing from one's health condition may or may not be a part of this process. Healing is a process by which well-being is achieved and quality of life is improved.

# Integrative (e.g., 'integrative health care' or 'integrative medicine')

An approach recognizing that:

- 1) Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (World Health Organization);
- 2) A multitude of internal and external factors (genetics, lifestyle, environment, social determinants, access to care, etc.) influence disease, health and well-being, and, therefore;
- 3) All appropriate practitioners and evidence-based therapies – conventional and/or complementary – should be explored to optimize health.



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# Western Medicine

**Examples:**

- Primary care provider
- Specialty physician
- OB/GYN
- Pharmacist
- Dentist
- Nurse practitioner
- Physician assistant
- Psychiatrist

Leverage the most effective therapies that science and medicine have to offer by pursuing the best of Western medicine throughout your health care journey.

Ask your doctor what patients can do to enhance treatment effectiveness. What characteristics or habits has your doctor observed or researched that effect the patient's health or improve treatment results?





# Western Medicine

Western Medicine Excels in Diagnostics



Regardless of any other components you choose to include in your health care plan, you are encouraged to use the best tests and diagnostics that Western medicine has to offer.



# Complementary Medicine

## Examples:

- Naturopathic Doctor (ND)
- Doctor of Oriental Medicine (OMD)
- Doctor of Chiropractic Medicine (DC)
- Ayurvedic Doctor (AD) or Practitioner (AP)
- Licensed massage therapist
- Licensed acupuncturist

Therapy Type	Examples
Mind-Body	Meditation Guided Imagery Progressive relaxation Hypnosis Yoga, Tai Chi, Qi Gong Aromatherapy Support groups Prayer
Body Manipulation	Chiropractic Massage Reflexology
Nutrition and Supplementation	Diet Supplementation (vitamins, minerals, herbs and botanicals)



# Complementary Medicine

Therapy Type	Examples
Exercise	Aerobic Strength training Yoga Tai Chi Qi Gong
Energy Therapies	Acupuncture Reiki Therapeutic touch Biofeedback therapy
Creative Therapies	Art therapy Music therapy Dance therapy

When considering adding complementary therapies to your health care plan:

- Perform your research on the therapy using reputable sources
- Use a licensed or credentialed practitioner
- Set up an initial consultation with the practitioner to explore if the therapy is right for you
- Tell your Western medicine doctor about the complementary therapy you want to use, and make sure it won't interfere with your medical treatments





## Nutrition

### Examples:

- Registered Dietician (RD)
- Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS)

### Goals:

1. Achieve optimal weight
2. Promote your personal health and nutritive and dietary needs
3. Reduce inflammation in the body

### MICHAEL POLLAN'S RULES FOR HEALTHY EATING

- Don't eat anything your great-grandmother wouldn't recognize as food.
- Don't eat anything with more than five ingredients, or ingredients you can't pronounce.
- Stay out of the middle of the supermarket; shop on the perimeter of the store, where real food tends to be placed.
- With few exceptions, don't eat anything that won't eventually rot.
- Always leave the table a little hungry.
- As often as possible, enjoy meals with the people you love.
- Don't buy food where you buy your gasoline.



# Exercise

Keep it Simple, Keep it Enjoyable

## Examples:

- Physical therapist
- Occupational therapist
- Exercise instructor (Yoga, Tai Chi, Qi Gong, Swimming, etc...)
- Personal trainer

*“Many exercise forms — aerobic, yoga, weights, walking and more — have been shown to benefit mood.”*

— Andrew Weil, MD



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# Stress Management

## Examples:

- Therapist
- Social worker
- Counselor
- Meditative movement (Tai Chi, Qi Gong, Yoga) instructor
- Licensed acupuncturist
- Licensed massage therapist



*“Reactions to stress are a well-recognized factor in immune function and can be either health protecting or health damaging. Stress generally suppresses immune function, while relaxation and meditation enhance it.”*

— Dean Ornish, MD



# Well-Being

## Examples:

- Therapist, counselor, or psychologist (mental, emotional, or behavioral health)
- Arts therapist (dance, art, music therapy)
- Occupational therapist
- Social worker
- Case manager





## Well-Being



### Building Resilience

- Make connections and nurture relationships
- Don't view any challenge as impossible
- Accept change as part of life
- Develop realistic, bite-sized goals
- Take decisive actions
- View challenges as an opportunity for self-discovery
- View yourself in a positive light
- Maintain perspective
- Have a hopeful outlook
- Practice self-care





## Support System

### Examples:

- Social worker
- Case manager
- In-home health aide
- Support groups
- Patient navigator
- Family
- Friends
- Neighbors/community



*“Healing occurs when we move from the loneliness, isolation, and depression of the I toward the sense of support, connection, and community of the we.”*

— Dean Ornish, MD

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# Spirituality

## Examples:

- Spiritual or religious leader
- Mentor or life coach



- What practices do I engage in that provide me with purpose or meaning?
- What practices do I engage in that make me feel connected to others? To the earth?
- What practices do I engage in that reflect my values?
- How do these practices impact my feelings and beliefs? How do my feelings and beliefs impact these practices?
- How can I continue to nurture my spiritual work throughout my healing? And what do I need from others (including my health care providers) to support me in this?

# Make a Plan



## What I want to do now



## What I might want to do later



## What I don't want to do

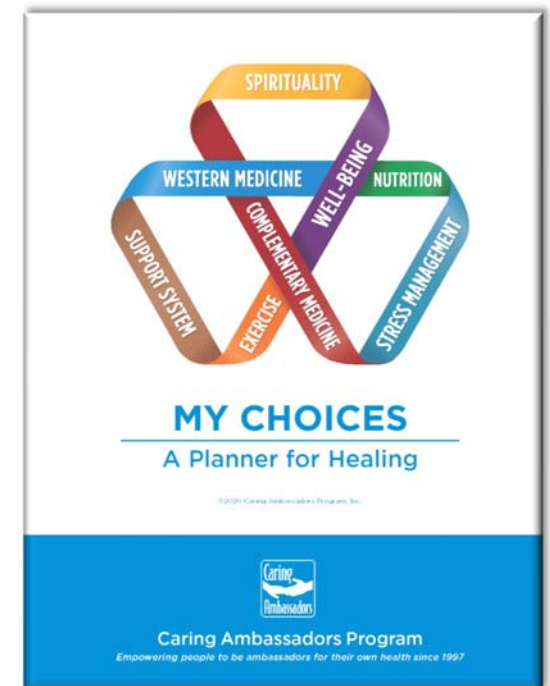
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# Additional Tools and Resources

<https://caringambassadors.org/tools-and-resources/>

- Health Care Resources: credible websites and healthcare information from reputable external resources
- Health Care Tools: Tools created to help you manage many aspects of you health care and wellness
- Research: Research findings, scientific evidence, and reports on the topics addressed on our website
- Lung Cancer Educational Materials
- Hepatitis C Educational Materials
- Free Brochures! Postcards and more...



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# Choosing a Health Care Provider/Practitioner

There are several factors to consider when choosing a health care provider/practitioner. Here are just a few:

- Are they covered by your insurance or health care plan?
- Will they accept your health care plan?
- Is their office conveniently located and easy to access?
- Which hospital (if any) do they work with? Is the hospital covered by your insurance?
- How can you communicate with them outside of appointment times? What is their availability?
- What is their experience treating others with the same chronic health condition(s) as you? Can they provide you with any results or outcomes?

# Choosing a Health Care Provider/Practitioner

- Is the provider/practitioner board certified or licensed in their field?
- Do they use language you can understand and take time to listen to your concerns and answer your questions? What is their communication style?
- What is their treatment style? Do they like to tackle conditions like yours head-on, or do they typically take a more conservative 'wait and see' approach?
- Will the provider support integrative treatment approaches, such as complementary therapies and lifestyle modifications, for the management of your chronic health condition?
- If they are a complementary health care practitioner, will they support your Western medicine treatment approaches and preferences?

*Putting together a health care team can be an overwhelming process.*

*Don't worry so much about finding the 'best' health care professionals; instead focus on finding the providers/practitioners who are best for you!*

# In Closing

- Choose your health care team like your life depends on it
- Ask questions of everyone
- Understand all aspects of your health condition
- Listen to your body and trust your intuition
- Be brave in all aspects of health

*Now, be an Ambassador for your own health  
by being **BOLD** in the **CHOICES** you make.*



[www.CaringAmbassadors.org](http://www.CaringAmbassadors.org)

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