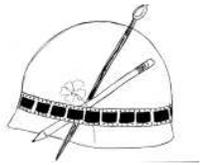


## Winter 2012 PRRC Course Catalog



### Anger Management.

Learn ways to avoid letting anger take control of your interactions. Avoid becoming angry in the first place and learn to recognize warning signs early and take measures to defuse tense encounters. The hope is that the veterans will decrease their overall arousal, feel they have more control over the challenging events in their lives, and be less likely to act in ways that either take them further from their goals or lead them to feel worse about themselves.



### Veterans' Art Guild.

Veterans work on their self-determined art projects in this art productivity class: 1) To take action steps toward full citizenship and community integration through the creative arts; 2) To visualize and actualize recovery goals through individual veterans' chosen means of artistic expression; 3) To improve physical stamina, manual dexterity and task-focused cognitive/affective processing; 4) To improve social skills by discussing and planning community integration around shared interests of class members; 5) To reduce stigma and isolation that may lead to relapse. Creative Arts Therapy staff and volunteers support mindfulness and problem-solving skills while encouraging Veterans in creating their art for exhibits in the community and the VA.



### Art of Life.

Art therapy has a long history of helping people get better through the action of art-making. Art is a powerful tool to identify and process unresolved emotions that there may be no words for in talk therapy, but that get in the way of recovery. Class exercises help students refocus attention away from fears, pain and rumination into healthier engagement in expressive painting, line drawing, pastels, storyboards and collage. Students bring non-verbal thought and feeling patterns to awareness, improving their emotional expression, creating visual "maps" to their recovery goals.



### Committing to Life.

Be an active participant in your life! Learn how to be more present in your daily life as well as how to be more engaged in activities that are meaningful to you. This class teaches skills from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) to help you:

- Accept your experience and be present in your life,
- Choose the values that mean the most to you, and
- Take action to live more fully.



### Community Integration.

Community integration refers to the right and opportunity to live, study, work, and recreate in the community, alongside and in the same manner as people without disabilities. This class uses a person-centered approach to make plans for community integration built upon each student's dreams, fears, interests, and needs.



### Coping Through the Senses.

Success oriented experiences that will help students develop skills that will enable them to tolerate distress. This class will help students learn to create a refuge from the stimulation of daily life.



### **Coping with Voices.**

This class teaches a number of different and helpful behavioral strategies to cope with hearing voices (or other auditory hallucinations or intrusive negative thoughts). Participants will get a chance to practice each strategy in class and will be encouraged to “put it to the test” in their daily lives. Veterans will also get a chance to discuss their experiences managing auditory hallucinations or intrusive negative thoughts in a supportive environment with peers who share similar experiences.



### **Dual Recovery.**

This class focuses on alcohol and substance abuse recovery as it relates to mental health recovery. Class will discuss veterans' recovery process, and get feedback from one another. Facilitator of this class is in recovery and has a dual diagnosis himself. The basis of the class is that recovery is possible.



### **Family Support.**

Open to caregivers, family members, and significant others of consumers of mental health services. The class will provide a forum for education and discussion of various aspects of living with a person with severe mental illness: medications, side effects, symptomatology, and pathology.



### **Finding Stillness.**

This class is designed to help you attain safety from PTSD and substance abuse and can be helpful for all those seeking safety from that which is getting in the way of wellness. By focusing on your strengths and ideals, techniques for creating safety and improving your daily life will be covered. With safety, compassion, and honesty this class will offer an opportunity to free yourself of behaviors that interfere with your recovery.



### **Health and Wellness.**

In our society, health information and wellness recommendations change so quickly that it is difficult to keep up with the most current information. This class is designed to address a variety of health issues common to our veteran population and discuss the health outcomes from some of our life style choices. The focus will be on learning strategies to improve health status without putting excessive time and effort into it.



### **Healthy, Hopeful, and Wise.**

Introducing a new PRRC class to help educate veterans on the dangers of obesity and some simple lifestyle changes to reduce their risk injury from associated health problems. This will be a series of classes that address separate health issues, teach some ways to change favorite recipes to be more health conscious, teach skills to plan healthy and tasty meals. We will also be collecting recipes for a veteran cookbook.



### **Healthy Living**

Self-care is defined as activities that people undertake with the goal of enhancing health, preventing disease, limiting illness, and restoring health. This class aims to educate veterans about how to make decisions and engage in activities to keep themselves physically and mentally fit. We will also talk about ways to stay healthy and to develop healthy habits.



### **Heart of Recovery.**

Are you ready to recover? This class will explore your readiness to recover while helping to prepare you for the development of meaningful recovery plans that will allow you to design and build a life of your choosing.



### **Hope, Transcendence, & Recovery.**

Hope is seen as integral to recovery in all contexts, and is not the same as optimism. It is more related to faith and concepts of spirituality. Transcendence is also seen as key, and allows for the idea that recovery can occur. This entirely non-denominational class covers such contexts and attempts to foster hope, along with the use of such concepts and spirituality for coping in everyday life and helps to set the stage for recovery.



### **Med Ed.**

Do you have questions about your medications? Bring them to this group! Join us for a group discussion of medications and their effects/side-effects with a nurse practitioner. You will have the chance to ask questions directly as well as learn how to talk to your provider.



### **Mind over Mood.**

Learn how to identify your own individual symptoms and manage warning signs of a relapse as well as cope with persistent symptoms and how to avoid alcohol and street drugs. Gain a deeper understanding of medication side effects and mood changes and how your thoughts can shape your moods.



### **Mindful Photography.**

Make the most of your mind, body, spirit... and digital camera. Learn how mindful photography can help you change focus away from nagging symptoms and toward expanding self expression and meaning in daily life. This class combines ancient mindfulness methods with the latest digital media technology to build mental and physical focus, emotional regulation, coping skills and motivation to live in the present moment.



### **Move with Maisie.**

Did you know physical activity lowers stress, decreases blood pressure, and increases flexibility? Your body does not only need food and sleep to function properly but physical exercise as well! Come engage in a variety of weekly movement activities, multiple movement techniques will be implemented. Physical exercise greatly benefits mental health.



### **Positive Viewpoints.**

Learn the techniques and experience the satisfaction of inner peace and joy! The science of happiness (a.k.a. Positive Psychology) now has specific ways for people to learn how to create a sustainable inner peace for themselves. We will be reviewing and practicing these techniques together. Benefits of positive emotions include: better health, achievement, resilience, a buffer against anxiety and depression – and just plain feeling good.



### **Psychosis Support Group.**

This is a support group for people who hear or see things that are not there, or have fears about things that are not true. The group shares tips on coping with these experiences, and discusses other topics of mutual interest such as relationships with loved ones. This is a registered class. Contact Dr. Jennifer Boyd (415-221-4810, ext. 3421) to enroll as a member.



### **Reading for Recovery.**

This bibliotherapy class involves selected readings from the first-person recovery-oriented literature. Attendees will be asked to read and discuss selections from books and articles describing an individual's recovery stories. Some of the selections will be from the following: "I Never Promised You a Rose Garden," "The Center Cannot Hold," "An Unquiet Mind," "Free to Fly," and "Get Me Out of Here." Reading and discussing recovery oriented stories can often inspire hope and serve to point out that recovery is real and possible. Veterans will also have the opportunity to create their own recovery story using a variety of media.



### **Recovery Walk.**

This class will use a variety of techniques to encourage people to integrate into the community and further their journey of recovery. We will be talking together about aspects of recovery that can help one achieve meaningful roles. Part of the class will involve walking various trails to increase exercise and awareness of our healthy living and how we can better interact with the environment.



### **Relationship Skills.**

Connection is the essential characteristic of relationships. People in relationships exist in some connection with one another, be it marriage, kinship, friendship, or acquaintance. Human relationship skills are the skills involved in human connection. The goal of this class is to gain some knowledge and insight into what are relationships, communication skills, starting relationships, managing relationship problems, and ending relationships.



### **Seeking Sanctuary.**

This class focuses on (non-denominational) spiritual issues. Class is led by the VA chaplaincy.



### **Skillful Emotions.**

Do you frequently experience overwhelming emotion?

Do you go from great happiness to intense sadness to overwhelming anger without seeing clearly why? Do these unpredictable emotional changes affect your relationships? This 13 week class will cover these concepts and discuss coping skills and approaches to better manage our emotional life and relationships. Throughout the course there is an emphasis on using emotional mindfulness to enhance our relationships. Participants will be asked to practice skills outside of class.



### **Social Skills.**

This class is based on a well-researched model of social skills training. The class provides an easy and fun way to learn about and practice expressive, receptive, and conversational skills involved in human relationships. The group focuses on training skills in the following areas: Conversation, Assertiveness, Conflict Management, Communal Living, Friendship and Dating, Health Maintenance, Work, and Coping Skills for Drug and Alcohol Use.



### **Sounds of Recovery.**

Music as a medium of expression can be an effective tool for processing unresolved and conflicted emotions through its effect on mood and coping. This class will explore creative ways to move recovery forward by developing and integrating the aural language of emotion and memory.



### **Speaking of Smoking.**

A class designed to help vets reduce or quit smoking cigarettes.



### **Stress Management.**

In this day and age, stress is an outdated way to deal with our ancient flight or fight response. We in the Bay Area have not needed to run away from a dinosaur for years. This class is designed to teach vets some easy ways to identify and relieve stress to lead a more enjoyable peaceful life.



### **Techniques and Role Recovery.**

This course provides foundational material related to role recovery. There is an emphasis on ideas related to recovery of roles based on self-chosen goals, techniques learned across classes are related to the WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan), and discussion of DVDs presenting consumers who have achieved role recovery is fundamental. Also, various techniques (such as behavioral approaches to managing auditory hallucinations) are included. Role recovery rather than symptom reduction is an important emphasis.



### **There is a Solution! (Peer Support).**

This is a support group for people who hear or see things that are not there, or have fears about things that are not true. Veterans can share experience, strength & hope. Veterans can encourage each other on their path towards meaningful lives.



### **Vet 2 Vet.**

Vet to Vet is a consumer partnership program that utilizes veterans in recovery in a peer-counseling capacity to help other veterans. Vet to Vet is administered by veterans who themselves have been consumers of VA mental-health services.



### **Veterans Community Council.**

The PRRC's Student Council exists to allow Veterans the opportunity to become "active participants" in the development and day-to-day operations of the program. This is an excellent opportunity to interact with other PRRC students and staff, aid in the development of new initiatives, and advocate for Veteran-centered care.



### **Veterans Story Corps.**

Write, Edit, Produce! This class will start with practice in writing, storyboarding and editing skills. Veterans will also learn skills essential to having a voice in the larger community and modern media, including ethical storytelling and effective journalistic practices. For those interested, there will be an introduction to the latest low-cost tools for digital storytelling and production.



### **Wellness Management.**

This class will provide knowledge on recovery strategies including practical facts about mental illness, how to build social supports, use medications effectively, cope with stress, problems and symptoms and get your needs met in the mental health system. Each class will build on the previous one, giving you the opportunity to enhance your knowledge each week while working on organizational and time management skills.



### **Women Create!**

Female veterans will be invited to discuss, share, visualize and actualize recovery goals through discussion of recovery concepts and through active creative expression. Class will encourage women to share aspirations and unique methods of creativity such as visual art, writing, and performing. Class will encourage mindfulness and support healthy social involvement through the discussion of shared interests of female veterans.



### **WRAP Group.**

This class is designed to guide you through the development of a Wellness Recovery Action Plan, or WRAP. This is a plan to help you in your mental health recovery, help you get well, stay well, and help you to create the life you want. This plan can also be useful when you are confronted with other stressful situations as well. You may not complete the entire plan in these sessions and that is OK. You will be encouraged to work on them at home or with other staff whom you feel comfortable with.