General PRRC Course Catalog

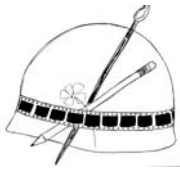
Acceptance & Commitment Therapy.

Serenity increases when we have the wisdom to accept the difficult things in life we cannot change and the commitment to change the ones we can. This class teaches skills from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) to help you:

- **A**ccept your experience and be present in your life,
- **C**hoose the values that mean the most to you, and
- **T**ake action to live more fully.

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.

Back to School.

This class provides an overview of the concepts and significance of factors that contribute to college success. The focus is on understanding the college/university systems, goal setting, educational planning, health maintenance, stress management, learning styles, study skills, college resources, and cultural diversity.

Blueprint to Wellness.

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.

Brainstorm.

This class will introduce you to some basics about your brain and some strategies to boost your brain power. We will also explore the impact of a variety of mental illnesses on your cognition.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Depression.

This group is designed to help veterans become aware of the ways in which thoughts can influence feelings and behaviors; question and challenge thoughts, assumptions, evaluations and beliefs that may be problematic or unrealistic; gradually face activities which may have been avoided; and try out new ways of behaving and reacting that move them closer to their recovery goals. **Pre-Registration Required**

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.

Doc & Peer Talk.

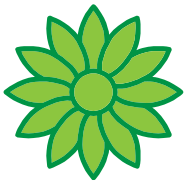
Do you have questions about your medications? Bring them to this group! Join us for a group discussion of medications and their effects/side-effects with a staff psychiatrist and a peer support technician. You will have the chance to ask questions directly as well as learn how to talk to your provider.

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.

Eating Right.

Empower yourself to make new and healthy changes to your diet! Learn about the super star foods and ways to incorporate them into easy, low cost meals. Find out the best food sources for vitamins and minerals. You will learn your body fat percentage and find out what this number means to your overall health. In addition we will discuss, 'Nutrition' in the news and how it relates to you.



Ending Self Stigma.

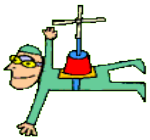
The goal of this class is to help individuals who are living with serious mental illness overcome internalized stigma, and move towards goals that important to them. The class is based on cognitive-behavioral therapy and recovery approaches, with an emphasis on the cultivation of the self "outside mental illness." Key topics include: stigma and stereotypes, internalization and automatic thoughts, strengthening the self, dealing with discriminatory behavior, and increasing connection with others.

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 Sanctuary.

This class focuses on the use of sprituality (rather than use of religion per se) as a coping skill and helpful foundation for recovery. Taking an evidence-based and manualized approach, the class covers such topics as What is Spirituality? The Search for More and Better Connections, Spiritual Practices, Giving Forgiveness, Finding Forgiveness, Values, and Finding/Making Meaning in life.



Get Yourself Going!

Many people seem to shut down when they are depressed. Self-activation helps you to understand how your actions from day to day, even moment to moment, have an effect on your mood. Once you understand how this works, you can begin to make strategic changes in your actions that will help you end depression and build a better life. This class will focus on those activities that inspire feelings of pleasure, mastery, and engagement.

Goal Setting.

Utilizing handouts, personal calendars, and PDA's, this group focuses on setting personal short-term and long-term goals while participating in PRRC programs.

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.

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, and 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.

Independent Living Skills.

This class is designed to help you make the most of your abilities and increase your self-reliance and self-confidence. By providing you with training, resources, and information, this class can help you take control of your life in order to live independently.

Insomnia Management.

Having trouble sleeping? This class will help you improve your sleep. This is a structured class that includes homework such as keeping track of how much you sleep. You are expected to try to attend regularly so that you can learn new skills and practice them. **To enroll in this class, you must have a brief screening appointment with one of the facilitators.**

Interpersonal Therapy (IPT) Workshop.

Many times an individual has difficulty maintaining relationships because of difficulty managing the emotions that are elicited by interactions with other people. In IPT we try to build up each veteran's ability to tolerate this interaction by breaking down what is happening step by step. Then as a class we process ways we can possibly change behaviors to reduce the stress and anxiety attached to these interactions.

Leisure Planning.

Under the guidance of a Recreation Therapist, a group for developing, planning, and incorporating leisure activities into your recovery plan.

Leisure Practicum.

An open source group of games, music, and other leisure activities to practice and enjoy in a group context.

Managing Anger.

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.

Mindfulness.

In this class we will define and explore mindfulness through lecture and training exercises that develop awareness throughout the day using designated environmental cues. Individuals are encouraged to select cues that then become triggers for awareness of the present moment, essentially making mindfulness a habit. The exercises may include, however, are not limited to breath work, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery and sensory awareness.

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.

Music over Mood.

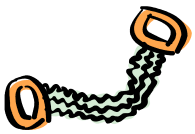
Learn how to identify and manage your emotional distress and improve coping by use of music in the context of support from peers and staff facilitators. This will include increased awareness of your own strengths, how thoughts and self talk affect mood, how to address warning signs of increased distress, and how improved coping can be part of an overall plan for recovery.

OT Workshop.

This group emphasizes engaging in meaningful occupations by exploring expressive media (art, journaling, music, computers). This is a project-oriented group that is driven by client interest and choice.

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.



Physical Wellness.

This group is intended to introduce (or re-introduce) PRRC students to basic physical wellness activities to improve overall physical conditioning and endurance, and to utilize exercise as a means to improve mood. Basic weight-bearing exercises using Theraband (an elastic, weight resitance band) are taught during this group. A handout of exercises and your own personal Theraband to use at home can be provided to you at your request.

Problem Solving.

This is a two-part course. The first is to help veterans become aware of how thoughts and behaviors can influence feelings. Veterans will learn how to question and challenge problematic thoughts, assumptions, evaluations, and beliefs. The second part of the class is designed to teach you a systematic way to approach and solve your problems. Veterans who would like to gradually face their problems and create change in their lives should consider this class.

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 group is for members only (no drop-ins)**; Contact Dr. Jennifer Boyd (415-221-4810, ext. 3421) to enroll as a member.

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.

Reducing Isolation.

Learn how to decrease isolation by increasing social connections with others within the class and the community at large. Students will discuss and identify individual motivation for decreasing isolation. Students will also identify their own individual barriers to increased socialization, increase coping and manage warning signs of mental health problems. Students will discuss their own experience of mental health recovery and compare effective steps that help them develop meaningful life roles.

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.

Rise Above Depression.

Everybody experiences sadness from time to time. We all have been “down” or “blue” at one time or another, but if you feel that you are living in a deep dark pit that you just can’t seem to get out of, you may be suffering from depression. This is an opportunity to meet with fellow veterans who may be experiencing similar feelings. It will be a chance to talk about the effects of depression on life and discuss coping skills. Join us; we can take this journey together.

Seeking Sanctuary.

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

Skills for Living.

A course designed to teach veterans basic life skills including increasing Self-Esteem, Financial Wellness, Communication, Wellness, and Home Management. A variety of topics will be presented and will be determined by the needs and preferences of veterans in the group.

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 assist 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.

Tai Chi.

This group utilizes Tai-Chi-based movements and exercises to improve overall fitness, balance, and focus. Tai Chi is a movement-based form of meditation and a martial art that is accessible to most participants regardless of age or physical condition.

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.

Therapy Gym.

This group aims to assist veterans in "getting in shape" for therapy and maximizing the results of psychotherapy and overall recovery efforts. It is designed for veterans who are waiting to begin therapy and those who are already participating in therapy and other recovery activities. The goal is to equip veterans with knowledge and skills that empower them to be effective participants in the therapy process. Topics include the purpose and function of therapy and key factors that make for successful therapy. Each participant will have the opportunity to discover relevant strengths, learn practical skills, discover more about themselves, and contribute to others' learning.

Veterans Voice.

Each of us, in our heart and mind, know that our own stories and those of our communities do matter, that these stories need to be told and heard, and that in their giving and receiving, the possibility of healing is born. Whether you prefer telling your story in the form of spoken word, writing, through music or visual imagery, in this class we share and shape our stories... and surely find that everyone has something to teach and something to learn. Skills like photography and drama are found to be a natural fit for mindfulness, self-advocacy, and social activities in the larger community.

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.

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.

WIZMO: Wisdom in Motion.

Inaction, rumination on problems, and limited roles can increase symptoms and stigma. Alternatively, healthy *flow* exists when one is immersed in activity with energized focus, fully present, and feeling successful in the process. Dynamic creative arts exercises effectively help students engage in *flow state* and uncover wiser choices for daily life behaviors. This class builds interpersonal skills, mindfulness and physical focus to reduce the effects of problems as students move toward Recovery in the community.

Women's Group.

This support group for women veterans is facilitated by Debbie Jamieson, PRRC Nurse Practitioner and a 7-year veteran of the US ARMY. Debbie brings first-hand experience with many of the issues faced by other women veterans. This group will provide a vehicle for women veterans to connect with other women veterans to explore their thoughts and feelings about their military experience, analyze both the positive and negative impact the military experience has had on their lives, look at how social pressures to downplay anger and give to others may have influenced their military experience, and finally what they can do to move past negative feelings like anger or resentment.

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.

Write Now.

Feel better about your writing. Feel better about yourself. Right Now. Students will collaborate and enjoy a variety of recovery-oriented writing skills exercises including journaling, expressive writing, structured writing, warm-ups to reduce "writer's block," poetry, prose, etc. All levels of write-ability are welcome. Guest writers will help inspire us down the line. Attendees will be helped to link writing approaches covered in class to their personal goals for recovery, and their hopes for recovery will be explored as part of the class.