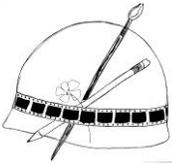


Winter 2015 PRRC Course Catalog

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 Therapy

Art therapy is the therapeutic use of art making, within a professional relationship, by people who experience illness, trauma or challenges in living, and by people who seek personal development. Through creating art and reflecting on the art products and processes, people can increase awareness of self and others cope with symptoms, stress and traumatic experiences; enhance cognitive abilities; and enjoy the life-affirming pleasures of making art. Class exercises help students refocus attention away from symptoms into healthier engagement in expressive painting, line drawing, pastels, storyboards and collage. Students support their recovery goals by developing new skills through self-expression and creative productivity.



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 including the impact on attention, memory, speech, visual processing, and speed of processing.



CBT for Voices and Paranoia

Do you struggle with hearing voices, feeling paranoid, or having unusual, worrisome thoughts? In this class, we will learn a variety of tools that may help you reduce these types of stressful experiences and improve your life satisfaction. This class is based on cognitive behavioral therapy, or CBT, which has been shown to be effective in overcoming many types of problems, including those related to hearing voices and feeling paranoid. CBT can help you achieve your goals by looking at relationships between what you think, how you feel, and what you do. You can expect to take an active role in class, and to practice the new skills you learn between sessions.



Community Mindfulness

This is a registered community living skills training series of 11 three-hour classes. The purpose is learning, practicing and photographing mindful recovery in the real time SF community outside the VA hospital. Each session begins with an orientation to active "lens cap off" mindfulness techniques integrated with digital photography. Veterans will each have a unique staff coach assigned for recovery support during the session. We will choose a destination, get on MUNI and then go take photos in SF for 2 hours. This class will provide wellness-oriented, socially-engaging, sustainable here/now experiences to sharpen mental focus and spotlight the present.





Dual Recovery.

Dual Recovery is a class designed to explore how mental health and substance use interact and to support people towards their individual recovery goals. It is helpful to people who are using an abstinence-based approach to their recovery as well as Veterans who choose to continue to drink and/or use drugs, but would like to reduce the harm caused by their use. You will receive factual information as well as have a chance to process your own individual hard work.



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.



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.



Let's Go!

The objective of this course is to provide and increase opportunities for community integration. It is also intended to empower veterans to organize and lead their own group meetings to discuss and plan community outings.



Man in Society.

Man in Society is a group for men exploring life from a deep sense of core values, committed to developing a fuller sense of purpose in life particularly in modern society.



Meditation for Recovery

How can mediation enhance recovery? The countless values of meditation have become acknowledged and practiced for thousands of years. This class will give you the tools to use to develop your own meditation practice. We will work together to develop a practice that is right for you using techniques to calm the mind and body to develop wisdom and compassion in your daily life. The San Francisco Bay Area is home to many meditation traditions. As we build our practice, we will also be exploring ways to connect to meditation centers and groups in our community.



Mental Health Preferences.

This class provides an opportunity to develop a mental health advance directive so that you can get the most helpful care possible if you are ever in a crisis situation. This class can be used, if you wish, to help healthcare providers, spokespersons, and/or loved ones know what you do and don't want in terms of your care. You and the class facilitators will develop individualized plans for how best to help you when you most need it, based on your personal wishes and experiences.



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.



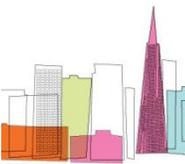
Music Box.

This class, related to the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), focuses on developing the use of music as a coping skill and daily maintenance tool. Specifically, by including music in your WRAP Wellness Toolkit and Daily Maintenance Plan you will practice ways to use music as a recovery tool in your everyday life.



Music Project.

The music support group is a recovery-oriented group with a focus on enhanced community integration. This is not a "get together and jam" type of group. Interested individuals meet individually prior to the possible start of the group to answer questions, discuss individual goals for the group based on one's recovery plan with the group facilitator, and so forth. Weekly material and content is driven based on group need and goals. Weekly groups will consist of topics such as, but are not limited to the following: developing one's "musical ear," basic blues structures, the role of the drummer and bass player, the group performing "cover songs," playing music as a group in the park, and/or creating and performing originals.



My Creative Life

This class explores how active creative arts processes offer an adaptive pathway to building strengths and skills leading to better resilience and wellness in the community. Veterans may explore and discuss a variety of media including visual arts, writing, music, drama, dance, digital video, photography, etc.. Each Veteran will be supported in developing their own personal creativity goal and practice to do at home and/or in the community.



OWL- Optimal Wellness Living.

Steer yourself on the right track by joining this fun, enjoyable fitness based program. From a recreational standpoint, this program will focus on cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, core function, and flexibility while incorporating wellness principles of the mind, body, and spirit to get you WELL and STAY WELL! You will navigate through further education about various fitness domains so that you can identify and organize physical activities conducive to your needs. Plus, it will be great in developing social skills and build camaraderie amongst your peers. What have you got to lose?



Pathways to Recovery.

This class uses the journey as a metaphor to identify and use personal strengths to engage in the recovery process. It reinforces the idea that recovery is about changing our lives, not just our biochemistry.



Peer Support Group.

The group is led by two VA Peer Specialists, who are themselves in recovery. A different recovery focused dialogue will be discussed weekly based on group need and the use of a manual. This group is open to anyone who would like to participate. The group focuses on building upon ones' strengths with a specific emphasis on further developing coping skills for everyday life.



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.



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.



Relationship Lab

This class offers a practical, safe, supportive classroom experience for Veterans who want to develop their communication abilities, learn about creative problem-solving and benefit from supportive team-work. You will gain practical skills and insight into your thoughts, feelings and other things that may affect the different relationships in your life. This class incorporates role-plays, brainstorming, coaching and motivational practice with staff and peers to help you be more at ease and easy-going in relationships with peers, friends and family, community acquaintances and MUNI trips.



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 support group explores the spiritual dimension of coping with mental health issues, how that relates to our daily lives, and how it impacts the “whole person”, including the physical, mental, and emotional parts of us. The discussion topics include: completing a spiritual assessment; how spirituality is different from religion; what is faith and belief?; dealing with spiritual injuries such as distress, anger, bitterness, hopelessness, grief, guilt, shame, fear, and loneliness; and use of various spiritual tools to help us cope with our illnesses and problems. Participants of all faiths and of no faith are welcome. The goal of this class is to present practical spiritual interventions that enable us to better live our daily lives and to be integrated “whole beings”.

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 studies Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) concepts, 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.



Based on a well-researched model of social skills training, this 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.

Speaking of Smoking.



This is a great place to spend time exploring your thoughts and ideas around smoking, cutting down, quitting, and/or staying quit. It is a no pressure environment, utilizing an educational and a health coaching approach. Most people who attend are working on making changes to improve their health, their financial outlook and to reduce the stigma associated with their smoking, but sometimes people come just to consider their options. We use a comprehensive workbook to explore a variety of topics, including the relationship between stress and smoking, nicotine replacements, and how to put together a rock solid quit plan.

Story Corps.



Writers of all levels are welcome to attend the Veterans Story Corps. In this class, veterans work individually on a variety of recovery-oriented writing exercises to increase self-awareness and reduce tension while also increasing language arts and communication skills. Veterans are offered an opportunity to explore prompts including journaling, expressive writing, poetry, non-fiction, playwriting, and short stories about real topics relevant to their current challenges or personal goals. Group members are invited to practice their storytelling skills and share their writing with peers to gain support and further reflection. Anyone—from beginner to expert—is welcome to come and try their hand at Story Corps



Techniques in 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.



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 provides 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.