

PRRC COURSE CATALOG

FALL 2020

Presented by VA Video Connect ONLY

ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT TO LIFE

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

BLUEPRINT FOR RECOVERY (Wellness and Recovery Action Planning)

This class is designed to guide you through the development of a Wellness Recovery Action Plan, or WRAP. This is a plan that assists in your mental health recovery, helps you get well and stay well, and identifies the life you want. It 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 you will be encouraged to work on it at home, with other staff, and/or natural supports.

COGNITIVE SKILLS TRAINING

Do you have trouble paying attention or concentrating? Planning and organizing? Learning and remembering? Do any of these problems get in the way of doing what you want or need to do? This class will focus on improving thinking skills like concentration, attention, memory, planning, organization, and problem-solving. Each session, students will practice skills to improve these areas and learn new ways of “working around” thinking difficulties. Improving these skills may help you to perform better in everyday activities and reach your goals.

COPING WITH VOICES AND PARANOIA

Do you struggle with hearing voices, feeling suspicious or paranoid, or having unusual, distressing 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 suspicious or 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 this class, and to practice the new skills you learn between sessions.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

This class will use elements of positive psychology, WRAP, and other techniques to focus on opportunities to have a political voice. Instruction and discussion of civics, media literacy and critical thinking will be included. All political points of view will be respected. The object is to be clear and effective in presenting your views to others. Benefits and challenges of political empowerment and acting as a group will be discussed, as will implications for Veterans as a group and the differences between political expression in military and civilian contexts.

PRRC COURSE CATALOG

FALL 2020

VVC ONLY

C O N T I N U E D

DUAL RECOVERY

This class focuses on alcohol and substance use recovery as it relates to mental health recovery. You will be able to discuss the recovery process and get feedback from other group members. This class is facilitated by someone with a dual diagnosis who is in recovery as well. The basis of the class is that recovery IS possible.

ENDING SELF-STIGMA

This class uses a structured approach to help you stamp out the effects of stigma and reclaim your life story. Sometimes we can hold ourselves back from working toward the life we want. Self-stigma is when we start to believe the unfair negative myths about people who live with mental health challenges. Left unchallenged, self-stigma can be harmful. We will fight it together in this class with facts, skills, and the power of re-narrating our own life stories.

FOOD & FITNESS

This program will provide you with information, skills and motivation so you can be successful in creating a healthier life. You will learn the effects of being overweight on both physical and mental health; some you may be aware of and others you may not know. This is a chance not only to learn why and how to get healthy, but to actually DO IT! People who have taken this class lose an average of 8 pounds. So, come join us in developing healthful habits while having fun.

HAPPINESS BOOT CAMP

Happiness can be conditioned. While some people seem to be born eternal optimists, the rest of us have to work at it. Just as a recruit is molded into a Marine, Soldier, Airman, or Sailor during boot camp through physical and mental training, Veterans in the *Happiness Boot Camp* will learn about and practice the evidence-based exercises that have been shown to increase happiness and sustain it. Like any boot camp, *Happiness Boot Camp* requires focus and may feel like hard work, at least in the beginning. For those who are up to the challenge, the end result will be the development of a personalized emotional fitness routine that can be used to provide lasting happiness!

HEALTH FORUM

Do you want to feel better and be in control of your health? Then this forum is for you! Registration is not required, attend when we are discussing a topic you find important to your health! Topics include: heart health, diabetes, obesity, cancer (colorectal, lung, prostate, skin), prevention and treatment of common infectious diseases, how to make the most of doctor visits, and any other topics that participants feel would be important to explore and discuss. Calendar of topics will be available in advance.

PRRC COURSE CATALOG

FALL 2020

VVC ONLY

C O N T I N U E D

INNER RESOURCES

This class is an educational program using mindfulness, breathing, and meditation to enhance your ability to cope with stress. You will learn to deal with stress as it is happening by practicing meditations during the class, and on your own in between class meetings. You will receive weekly handouts and audio-recordings of guided practice sessions for home use. Handouts include introductory information, frequently asked questions, and journal exercises to help build your own personal practice of meditation for stress.

LIVING WELL WITH CHRONIC PAIN

Chronic pain is any physical pain that persists over time and gets in the way of daily living (e.g., migraines, back/knee/neck pain, arthritis, etc.). In this class, you will learn research-backed skills and strategies for coping with chronic pain, so you can get back to doing the things you want and need to do. Using a cognitive behavior therapy-based approach, you will be supported to explore how unhelpful thoughts, feelings, and behaviors maintain the cycle of pain. Then, you'll learn new skills and strategies for interrupting the pain cycle to gain more control over your pain and your life.

MUSIC TOOLBOX

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.

RECOVERY IN YOUNG ADULTHOOD

This class will address common issues among young adult Veterans (approximately 21-40 years old), such as readjusting to civilian life, going to school, getting a job, managing family/relationships, and pursuing life goals. It will introduce coping strategies for managing obstacles to goals, including psychosis and other mental health problems (like depression, PTSD, and substance use). This class will help you learn tools to understand and overcome these challenges, while you move forward with your life and pursue your recovery goals. This group will be open to all young adult Veterans (including those not enrolled in the PRRC program). We will sometimes meet at various destinations in the community, as agreed upon by class members, to encourage social connection and community integration. Please join us!

ROOTS OF RECOVERY

Recovery from serious mental illness is possible! Recovery involves more than just symptom reduction, it involves building a life you value and desire, a life that reflects your unique talents, strength, and values. This class will provide general knowledge about mental health and recovery, including practical facts about mental illness and effective treatments, how to build social supports, how to use medications effectively, how to cope with stress, problems and symptoms, and how to navigate the mental health system to get your needs met and work toward recovery. We will also explore the meaning of "recovery" and will include multi-media presentations such as videos and stories, as well as opportunities to create your own definition of what it means to be in recovery.

PRRC COURSE CATALOG

FALL 2020

VVC ONLY

C O N T I N U E D

SEEKING SANCTUARY

When a person experiences trauma and losses in their life, often the foundations of their beliefs and values are shattered. This can result in 'moral injury or distress' in the inner being or soul. This class deals with such issues such as the difference between spirituality and religion, and such emotions as guilt, shame, anger, resentment, pain and suffering, loneliness, and despair. Practical tools are presented and discussed to deal and cope with these emotions, to facilitate renewal and healing.

SELF-COMPASSION

Are you hard on yourself when you make a mistake or struggle in life? Do you beat yourself up when things don't go the way you'd hoped? Most of us feel compassion when a close friend is having a hard time. What would it be like to offer that same caring attention to yourself, especially when you are struggling? To have the strength to stand up to harm, including the harm that we cause to ourselves through self-criticism and self-judgment? Research shows that self-compassion is associated with lower levels of anxiety and depression, stronger coping with life challenges, emotional well-being, healthy habits like diet and exercise, and more satisfying personal relationships. In the *Self-Compassion* class, you will learn how to understand the benefits of self-compassion, practice self-compassion in daily life, motivate yourself with kindness rather than criticism, handle difficult emotions with greater ease, and identify obstacles to self-compassion and strategies for overcoming them.

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 class will cover these concepts and introduce coping skills and approaches to better manage our emotional life and relationships, using Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT). Using real life examples related to your goals and behaviors, we will work to apply mindfulness, emotion regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, and distress tolerance skills more effectively. Active participation in and outside of class will be essential to help feel more skillful, confident, and effective in managing emotions and cultivating healthy relationships.

SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

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.

PRRC COURSE CATALOG

FALL 2020

VVC ONLY

C O N T I N U E D

STORY CORPS

Writers of all levels are welcome to attend the *Veterans Story Corps*. In this class, you will work on a variety of recovery-oriented writing exercises to increase self-awareness and reduce tension while also increasing language arts and communication skills. There will be opportunities to explore prompts including journaling, expressive writing, poetry, non-fiction, playwriting, and short stories about real topics relevant to your current challenges or personal goals. You are invited to practice storytelling skills and share 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*!

TRAUMA RECOVERY

This class is designed to assist Veterans who have difficulties related to trauma or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The focus of this group will not be on re-telling traumatic experiences from the past; it will instead teach tools to help manage trauma-related symptoms you are currently experiencing. The class will work with thoughts and beliefs you may have related to traumatic experiences. The three main techniques we will teach to reduce PTSD and other posttraumatic symptoms such as anxiety, distress, irritability, and high levels of body tension are:

- Breathing Retraining
- Education
- Cognitive Restructuring

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. This class will encourage you to share aspirations and unique methods of creativity such as visual art, writing, and performing. As well as encourage mindfulness and support healthy social involvement through the discussion of shared interests.