



SUMMER 2018

PRRC COURSE CATALOG

ACCEPTANCE & COMMITMENT TO LIFE (ACT)

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 values that mean the most to you, and
- Take 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.

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 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.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

In this class, participants: 1) explore personal and societal values, feelings, and attitudes related to all types of relationship (friends, intimate partners, co-workers, family) 2) Learn and practice skills for building safe, supportive, and satisfying relationships, 3) Explore relevant community resources related to relationships.



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C O N T I N U E D

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

This class will use elements of positive psychology, WRAP, and other techniques to focus on empowering oneself 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 will be to be clear and effective in presenting one's 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.

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 & 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.

DUAL RECOVERY

This class is a place to learn about and discuss issues related to substance use and mental health. The atmosphere is welcoming and non-confrontational, and embraces both the abstinence model as well as the harm reduction approach. We will learn about addiction, how addiction interplays with mental health, and create individualized and comprehensive relapse prevention plans. There will also be videos shown, followed by discussion. Veterans facing any addictions are welcome, including Veterans struggling with tobacco addiction, gambling, sex or food addictions and problems with 'habit-forming' prescription medication.

FINANCIAL FITNESS

Financial Fitness promotes self-efficacy by helping you plan to for short and long-term financial goals and to successfully manage your money. You will learn new tools and strategies for your unique financial situation and can build healthy spending habits to become a more competent consumer while living within your means. Topics and exercises include: Identifying financial goals; tracking and managing expenses; managing debt; understanding credit; using financial institutions; and building savvy consumer skills. Participants will receive quality information, share their own experiences (both good and bad), and strategize with each other around implementing smart financial strategies.



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FOOD & FITNESS

This program will provide you with information, skills and motivation so that 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 are probably already aware of, but others you may not know. This is a chance to not only learn why and how to get healthy, but to actually DO IT! People with mental illness who have taken this class lose an average of 8 pounds. So come join us in developing healthful habits while having fun.

INNER RESOURCES: MEDITATION

This class is an educational program using mindfulness, breathing, and meditation to enhance your ability to cope with stress. In the class 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. The handouts include information, frequently asked questions, and journal exercises to help you build your own personal practice of meditation for stress.

LIVING WELL WITH BIPOLAR

Do you struggle with the ups and downs of your mood? This behaviorally-oriented group offers skills for effectively coping with your manic and depressive symptoms. We focus on activities that you can engage in, thoughts you can change, and problem-solving techniques to get you back into your life. This group is specifically designed and most appropriate for veterans with bipolar or schizoaffective disorder.

MY RECOVERY STORY

Key topics include: stigma and stereotypes in society, disclosing mental illness to others, telling your mental health recovery story, watching and critiquing others' recovery stories, and learning about options for advocacy. My Recovery Story was created for individuals who have taken the Ending Self Stigma class, but this is not a requirement. The goal of this class is to support Veterans in taking active steps to overcome internalized stigma. This class is largely student-driven, so that the class topics are presented by students and facilitators and are of personal interest to students.

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.

OUTDOOR CORPS

Veterans will:

- learn about the many physical and mental health benefits of time spent in nature and the outdoors.
- learn and practice skills for using nature and outdoor experiences as wellness tools.
- be supported to connect to local natural and outdoor experiences and communities.



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PTSD 101

This class teaches skills that improve symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), such as strategies for coping with triggers, managing anger, and connecting with others. The more that you apply the skills in your daily life, the better they work and the faster the results. You will be encouraged to practice the skills outside of class and to share your observations of which skills work best for you. Participants can attend from 1-3 times per week.

RECOVERY 101

Recovery from serious mental illness is possible. But 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.

RECOVERY IN YOUNG ADULTHOOD

This class will address common issues among young adult Veterans (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!

SF CREATIVE COMMUNITY TOURS

This field trip explores creative SF on Friday mornings. These events are free for Veterans. VA staff will meet you there, provide information and support to experience a variety of beautiful places in SF: museums, parks, mindful photography walks, and other creative ways to enjoy living in SF. No previous art experience is required.

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.



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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). Group members will bring in examples related to their self-identified goals and problem behaviors, actively working to apply mindfulness, emotion regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, and distress tolerance skills more effectively in their own lives. Active participation in and outside of class will be essential to help group members 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.

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!

STRENGTH THROUGH SELF-COMPASSION

Are you really 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.

Participants in Strength through Self Compassion class will learn how to:

- Understand the benefits of self-compassion
- Practice self-compassion in daily life
- Motivate themselves with kindness rather than criticism
- Handle difficult emotions with greater ease
- Identify obstacles to self-compassion and strategies for overcoming them



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TOBACCO TACTICS

Tobacco Tactics is designed to assist Veterans with tobacco cessation and reduction. The only requirement is a desire to make positive changes around your tobacco use. We use a VA-issued workbook which is quite useful and informative. The class is designed to include hand-tailored interventions to match where you are with your own process. There is no pressure to quit on any given date, only lots of support to help you reach *your own goals*. Since inception of the class, many Veterans have quit smoking, so please come join us and see what we can do together as a team!

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.

WHOLE HEALTH COACHING

Whole Health Coaching takes a mindfulness approach in considering the things that matter most in your life, the things for which you want your health, with an emphasis on self-care and a respect for each person's individual uniqueness. We will take steps together in your personal health and recovery to find harmony and balance in your whole health. This Veteran-centered process will demonstrate how the areas of self- and professional-care combined can support a Veteran's health and life missions.

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.

WORK ZONE

Thinking about returning to work or volunteering? If you could use some great pointers on getting back into the work force, whether you are recently out of the job market or if it has been a while, come join us. This pre-employment workshop is designed to support your success. We will provide the basic tools for you to get started and to keep you motivated along the way. We will cover topics such as career exploration, interviewing skills, resume preparation, professional attire (for a variety of work settings), 'office' etiquette, communicating effectively with co-workers, etc.

WRAP (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 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.