

Boise VAMC's

Guide to Behavioral Health Groups and Workshops

Mission:

The Behavioral Health Service's mission is to maintain and improve the health and well-being of Veterans through excellence in health care, social services, education, and research

Veterans: This document can be located on the Boise VAMC website: www.boise.va.gov

VA Providers: This document can be located on the BH SharePoint, Shared Documents

Behavioral Health Levels-of-Care

Each Veteran receiving care through the Behavioral Health Department is individually assessed to ensure the optimal level-of-care is provided for each unique situation. Treatment plans are tailored to each Veteran's needs, strengths, and resources. Our multidisciplinary team of professionals is comprised of psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed social workers, licensed mental health counselors, peer support specialist, nurse practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, and occupational therapists. Chaplaincy services are available upon request. As a training facility, we have multiple professional trainees, as listed above, participating in our programs that provide additional services with supervised care.

This guide has been created to provide Veterans and family members a comprehensive resource describing the many psychotherapeutic groups available at the Boise VAMC Behavioral Health Department. Psychotherapeutic groups offer many benefits in the treatment of mental health recovery and substance abuse recovery. Groups are often as efficacious as individual therapy. Groups offer the opportunity for peer support and interaction.

Please use this guide to better understand the groups offered so our Veterans can receive the best possible treatment for their mental health needs.

Please talk to your Behavioral Health provider if you're interested in being referred to the groups listed. In the event you do not have an assigned provider and you are interested in attending one of the groups listed, please contact:

Behavioral Health Service
(208) 422-1108
(208) 422-1145

Peer Support – (208) 422-1000 + Option 1 + extension
Daniel Chapman ext: 7123
Cameron Rail (208) 891-6418
Steve Walker steven.walker3@va.gov

A Recovery Model for You!

Recovery is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential. Recovery is about finding your way in the world:

The way that works best for you so you can live the best life possible. So, you can live in the community you choose and do the things that keep you healthy.

Recovery is about living well.

- It is about moving beyond any label.
- It is about deciding who you are. Not about how others decide who you are.
- It is about creating a good life of your own choosing.

Change the focus from “what is wrong with you?” to: **“What is right with you?”**

In using this guide, please note that:

- Unless otherwise specified, all groups are located in the Behavioral Health Building (114)
- GR = Group Room

MONDAY

SUD Recovery Process Group

Sue Hicks

M 10:00-11:00 am, Bldg. 23/TELE

1-800-767-1750 CODE: 06837#

Progressions Moral Injury Program Phase 2 “ACT for the Treatment of Betrayal-based Moral Injury”

Chaplain Rachel Mikaelsen

M, 10:00-11:30am,

March 1st – May 3rd, 2021

In the Phase 2 group, Veterans learn Acceptance and Commitment Therapy processes of Acceptance and Self-As-Context, Spiritual processes of storytelling, making amends, and reclaiming personal power. This group is co-facilitated by Chaplain Mikaelsen and a mental health provider.

A Veteran is eligible for referral to Phase 2 programming after:

1.) Veteran has completed an evidence-based treatment for trauma-processing and mental health provider assesses that the Veteran meets criteria.

OR

2.) Veteran has been attending Lodestone for a period of time and through a joint assessment between Chaplain Mikaelsen and the Veteran's mental health provider.

A Phase 2 Veteran:

- Has done the hard work of trauma-processing and their PTSD symptoms are well managed.
- Is attuned to their own experience of guilt and shame and able to take a deeper look at the meaning and significance of their moral injury.
- Is at the beginning stages of understanding paradox and mystery and can embrace irreconcilable tension.

(Please send referrals to CH Mikaelsen or Dr. Angela Enlow)

SUD SOBER LIFESTYLES GROUP

Sue Hicks

M 11:00-12:00, Building 23- (In-person only)

MHICM Recreation Group (MHICM ONLY)

Julie Orozco

M, 11:30-2:00pm. Bldg. 114

Veterans to engage in various recreational opportunities in the community. Activities include bowling, playing pool, going on walks and to the movies.

Social Skills Group (MHICM ONLY)

Julie Orozco Geoff Hall

M 10:30-11:30 am, MHICM Kitchen

Social Skills group is an evidenced base group for individuals with severe chronic mental illness. The group consists of learning one particular skill each week, like making a request, or expressing a negative emotion. Each skill consists of 3-4 steps that are practiced in a series of role plays by each member. Referrals are accepted yearly.

Participants must learn the 4 basic skills through individual sessions prior to starting the group which usually begins in February and lasts four to five weeks.

ACT group

Angela Enlow

M, 1200-1300pm VVC

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT, pronounced “act”) focuses on learning ways to accept emotions and thoughts and commit to a quality life. You are not asked to think differently; instead you will learn to “see” your thoughts in such a way that they don't continue to guide your behavior. We also don't try to change emotions; rather, we'll focus on acceptance of emotion, but not in a “just give up” fashion. We will do this in a way that helps you notice that you have emotions and that you can carry emotion with you compassionately and still work to live the kind of life you want to live. If you have patients who would be a good fit for ACT and one of those availabilities works for them, please send me a referral either via email or cosigning me onto a note. This group is not going to be diagnosis specific. The group description is below.

SUD Emotional Regulation Group

Sue Hicks

M 1:00-2:00 pm, Bldg.23 (In-person only)

MONDAY

SUD Relapse Prevention

Sue Hicks

M 2:00-3:00 pm, Building 23- IN PERSON/TELE
1-800-767-1750 CODE: 06837#

Healthy Habits group

Julie Orozco

M, 2:00-3:30pm. VVC

The group is designed for all individuals enrolled in general behavioral health who are in the preparation and action stages of change. It will explore developing an identity that supports their desired change behaviors to reinforce long term improvements. Participants will learn strategies and skills to implement that will support their desired behaviors, habits and routines and minimize old negative behaviors and patterns. For example, veterans will look at the cues, craving, response and reward cycles of unwanted vs desired habits to problem solve interventions that can disrupt or reinforce the cycle. The group will be broken down into education, homework assignments and problem-solving barriers. Group size will be limited to 8 to facilitate in depth discussions and problem-solving opportunities. It will be a 90-minute 8-week VVC group that will meet on Mondays at 2pm beginning Oct 12. Depending on interest, the group has potential to be extended to a maintenance group that meets weekly to review habit trackers and to support intended outcomes. If you know of a veteran who would be interested, please call my extension @1339 or email me julie.orozco@va.gov.

Trauma Symptom Management (PTSD)

Group

Dr. April Rose

M, 3:00-4:00pm, VVC

This group is for veterans who have experienced significant trauma during their life. A PTSD diagnosis is not required for this group. People on the anxiety spectrum may find this group useful. Trauma symptom management group teaches veterans how to better manage common signs and symptoms associated with exposure to traumatic events. Examples of signs and symptoms include, but are not limited to avoidance, hyperarousal, intrusive experiences, emotion regulation, and sleep disturbances. Specific traumatic events experienced by participants are not discussed in group. The group is held for 8 weeks on Monday from 3:00-4:00p.m

Trauma Symptom Management (PTSD)

Group

D. Naomi Johnson

M, 5:30pm-6:30pm, VVC or GR1

This group is for veterans who have experienced significant trauma during their life. A PTSD diagnosis is not required for this group. People on the anxiety spectrum may find this group useful. Trauma symptom management group teaches veterans how to better manage common signs and symptoms associated with exposure to traumatic events. Examples of signs and symptoms include, but are not limited to avoidance, hyperarousal, intrusive experiences, emotion regulation, and sleep disturbances. Specific traumatic events experienced by participants are not discussed in the group. The group is held for 10 weeks.

TUESDAY

MOVE/Weight Program

Mona Randall

Tu, 10:00-11:30am, Bldg. 54

This group is for veterans wishing to work on weight issues.

This group takes a holistic approach to weight loss and healthy lifestyle changes, focusing on behavioral health, diet, and exercise.

SUD Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)

Dave Baumgart

T 11:00-12:00, Bldg. 23/VVC

In person or Video Group:

Contact Dave Baumgart at 208-422-1000 x7533 to get on the list for Veterans Video Connect

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Support Group

Susie Klepacki

Tu, 12pm-1pm, VVC

This support group offers LGBT Veterans with peer support in a safe, supportive, educational environment.

DBT Tuesday/Thursday (Dialectical Behavioral Therapy) Skills Group

Josh Bode

Tu & Th 10:00-11:30am, VVC

Please ask your provider to submit a consult for this group. This group provides the opportunity to learn coping skills to decrease interpersonal chaos, labile emotions and moods, impulsivity and confusion about self. This group offers veterans skills training in mindfulness, distress tolerance, interpersonal effectiveness, and emotion regulation. The group involves homework and outside skills practice and lasts approximately 32 weeks.

Housing-Up Group

John Randall

Tu, 2:00 pm-3:00 pm, River St. Conference Room
Ongoing, weekly group for veterans with HUD VASH Vouchers seeking housing. Veterans will develop skills and opportunities to decrease barriers to housing.

Progressions Moral Injury Program Phase 1 "Lodestone"

Chaplain Rachel Mikaelson

T, 2:30pm-4:00pm, ongoing

The Phase 1 group called "Lodestone" is where we cover topics such as: what are morals, where do they come from, how moral injury happens, PTSD/Spirituality, Spiritual Values, Grief & Loss, Whole Health, and moral injury through the lenses of various religions. This is an ongoing group with rotating topics. Veterans may start in the group at any point. This group is meant to be a starting point and landing pad for them to return to at any point in their healing journey. It also serves as a safe space to experience community and comradery.

To be eligible for Lodestone, Veterans need to be able to maintain sobriety for a minimum of 30 days prior to starting class, and have access to a mental health provider, or be starting an episode of care with a mental health provider. This group also is appropriate for Veterans who are:

- New to the VA
- New to mental health treatment
- Recently in recovery
- Able to see the world through a black & white lens
- Able to respectfully sit in a pluralistic group
- Have a desire to change

(Please send referrals to CH Mikaelson or Dr. Angela Enlow)

MHICM (Family Group)

Chalice Silflow & Kevin Sligar

Every 4th Tuesday 3:00pm-4:00pm GR 2

Must be in MHICM Program

WEDNESDAY

Brain Health

Brienne Dyer

W, 10:00-11:00, GR 4

The Brain Health group is an 8 session 1-hour class that teaches veterans important information about the brain. During the group, you will learn how to improve everyday problems with memory, attention, and problem solving. You will also learn how good sleep habits, stress management, healthy eating, and exercise will help your brain.

ACT group

Dr. Watford

W, 1000-1100 VVC

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT, pronounced "act") focuses on learning ways to accept emotions and thoughts and commit to a quality life. You are not asked to think differently; instead you will learn to "see" your thoughts in such a way that they don't continue to guide your behavior. We also don't try to change emotions; rather, we'll focus on acceptance of emotion, but not in a "just give up" fashion. We will do this in a way that helps you notice that you have emotions and that you can carry emotion with you compassionately and still work to live the kind of life you want to live. If you have patients who would be a good fit for ACT and one of those availabilities works for them, please send me a referral either via email or cosigning me onto a note. This group is not going to be diagnosis specific. The group description is below.

SUD Recovery Process Group

Sue Hicks

W 10:00-11:00, Bldg. 23/VVC

1-800-767-1750 CODE: 56544#

Pain Management (offered through Telehealth)

Rebekah Kintzing

W, 11:00-12:00pm, VVC

This group is for veterans who suffer from chronic pain. This eight-week pain management class is a psycho-educational group that addresses the bio-psycho-social aspects of chronic pain. Veterans learn cognitive behavioral interventions aimed at improved pain management and increased overall functioning.

MST Survivor Group

Sarah Kearney

W, 10:30 – Noon, GR3 / VVC

This group runs for 12 weeks and uses the Warrior Renew Curriculum. This is a psychoeducation group focusing on such topics as sleep, triggers and anxiety, anger, understanding trauma, defining relationship patterns, guilt and shame, losses and grief, healthy intimate relationships, effective communication and finding meaning, purpose and joy. If interested in attending, veterans or providers can contact me at x3500 or sarah.kearney@va.gov.

MHICM Lunch Bunch

MHICM Staff

W, 11:00-1:00pm, bldg. 114 Kitchen

This group is for veterans in the MHICM program. This group encourages healthy social and interpersonal skills.

--The vets need to be referred to the MHICM program before they can attend!

MHICM Peer Support Group (MHICM ONLY)

Steven Walker

W, 11:00-Noon. TELE

This group provides peer support to assist Veterans in maintaining the Mental Health Recovery process. This group provides socialization and support allowing veterans in the MHICM program a chance to talk with other veterans about the successes and any challenges they are processing.

SUD SOBER LIFESTYLES GROUP

Sue Hicks

W 11:00-12:00, Building 23- (In-person only)

WEDNESDAY

Social Skills Group (MHICM ONLY)

Julie Orozco Geoff Hall

W 11:30-12:30 am, MHICM Kitchen

Social Skills group is an evidenced base group for individuals with severe chronic mental illness. The group consists of learning one particular skill each week, like making a request, or expressing a negative emotion. Each skill consists of 3-4 steps that are practiced in a series of role plays by each member. Referrals are accepted yearly. Participants must learn the 4 basic skills through individual sessions prior to starting the group which usually begins in February and lasts four to five weeks.

SUD Emotional Regulation Group

Sue Hicks

W, 1:00-2:00 pm, Bldg.23 (In-person only)

SUD Relapse Prevention Group

Sue Hicks

W 2:00-3:00, Bldg. 23/TELE

1-800-767-1750 CODE: 56544#

STAIR Group

Melissa Kremer

W, 2:00 – 3:00, VVC

STAIR: This group will focus on developing emotional awareness, the ability to regulate emotions, and skills for navigating relationships. This group will help you understand the unhealthy patterns you have developed in relationships and learn ways to increase assertiveness, flexibility, and closeness with those you care about. This is a 12-week group 60 min group.

DBT Skills Group

April Thorndyke

W, 2pm-3pm, VVC

This is an open cohort DBT group that supports individuals in learning skills to cope with emotional distress in productive ways. It's a great option for individuals who do not meet criteria for 32-week DBT group, desire a refresher in all skills or one specifically, or someone who would benefit from skills to decrease symptoms. This is an open cohort group; individuals may choose to attend certain weeks if they are only interested in specific topics. The topics of DBT, Distress tolerance, Emotion Regulation, and Interpersonal Effectiveness will be rotated, spending four weeks on one topic with two weeks of mindfulness between each topic. For example, they could attend the 4 weeks of distress tolerance, yet opt out of the 2 weeks of mindfulness that follows.

Email, message, or attach April Thorndyke, LCSW to a note in CPRS

CPT Graduate Group

Melissa Kremer

W, 3:00 p.m. -4:30 p.m. bldg. 23 (2nd and 4th Wed)

This group is for those who have completed CPT to touch point for worksheets and questions. Short term participation

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

Adam Brotman, Trina Elsasser

W, 3pm-4:30pm, GR 1 & 2

This is a clinically proven program of meditation and mindful movement practices for alleviating stress, anxiety, PTSD, depression and other conditions. This powerful approach shows you how to develop present moment attention in order to permanently change the way you deal with stress. You will learn how to replace stress-promoting habits with mindful ones – skills that will last a lifetime! This is an 8-week program.

Please Contact Adam or Trina for Referrals

WEDNESDAY

Anger Management

Thomas Madden

W, 5:30-6:30pm, GR 1, B114

This group is for veterans who are self-referred, clinician-referred, or court-ordered to anger management. Managing Anger is a psycho-educational and therapeutic process group that meets each Wednesday's from 5:30 to 6:30 pm for eight consecutive weeks. The group focuses on cognitive, verbal/behavioral coping skills to manage anger using the SAMHSA program. New referrals are welcome!

Trauma Symptom Management (PTSD) Group

Rodney Dotson

W, 5:30pm-6:30pm, VVC and GR 3&4

This group is for veterans who have experienced significant trauma during their life. A PTSD diagnosis is not required for this group. People on the anxiety spectrum may find this group useful. Trauma symptom management group teaches veterans how to better manage common signs and symptoms associated with exposure to traumatic events. Examples of signs and symptoms include, but are not limited to avoidance, hyperarousal, intrusive experiences, emotion regulation, and sleep disturbances. Specific traumatic events experienced by participants are not discussed in group. The group is held for 8 weeks on Monday from 3:00-4:00p.m.

Thursday

Progressions Moral Injury Program Phase 2 “ACT for the Treatment of Betrayal-based Moral Injury”

Chaplain Rachel Mikaelsen

TH, 10:00-11:30am,

March 1st – May 3rd, 2021

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OR

2.) Veteran has been attending Lodestone for a period of time and through a joint assessment between Chaplain Mikaelsen and the Veteran's mental health provider.

A Phase 2 Veteran:

- Has done the hard work of trauma-processing and their PTSD symptoms are well managed.
- Is attuned to their own experience of guilt and shame and able to take a deeper look at the meaning and significance of their moral injury.
- Is at the beginning stages of understanding paradox and mystery and can embrace irreconcilable tension.

(Please send referrals to CH Mikaelsen or Dr. April Rose)

Community Based Employment Services (CBES)

Allen Willard

Thurs, 10:00 a.m., Bldg. 23-Basement

This group is for veterans that are ready for re-entry into competitive employment. This group offers job leads, resume, cover letter assistance and avocation for the veteran with prospected employers.

DBT Tuesday/Thursday (Dialectical Behavioral Therapy) Skills Group

Josh Bode

Tu & Th 10:00-11:30am, VVC

Please ask your provider to submit a consult for this group. This group provides the opportunity to learn coping skills to decrease interpersonal chaos, labile emotions and moods, impulsivity and confusion about self. This group offers veterans skills training in mindfulness, distress tolerance, interpersonal effectiveness, and emotion regulation. The group involves homework and outside skills practice and lasts approximately 32 weeks.

SUD Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)

Dave Baumgart

T 11:00-12:00, Bldg. 23/VVC

In person or Video Group:

Contact Dave Baumgart at 208-422-1000 x7533 to get on the list for Veterans Video Connect

Hepatitis C Education Class

Patricia Michas

Th (4th Thursday of the week), 10:30-12:00pm,
T111 Research/Education Conference Room.

Refer all newly diagnosed patients. This class is recommended for all Hepatitis C patients and is required for Hepatitis C patients considering treatment.

This group helps educate veterans with Hepatitis C. TOPICS TO BE COVERED INCLUDE: -Overview of Hepatitis C Basics, including genotype, Transmission, Risk factors, Effects of Hepatitis C on liver (fibrosis & cirrhosis), Importance of Hepatitis A & B vaccine, Treatment Overview, Common side effects of treatment, Suggestions for managing side effects, and Suggestions for maintaining healthy life style changes.

Thursday

Shame Resiliency Group

Russell-Smith, Emily and Shae Griffin
Th, 1100-12:00, Hybrid (GR1 & 2) VVC
It is ideal for populations working with issues such as self-esteem, love and belonging, authenticity, the development of empathy, connection, and power, and the ability to cultivate a resilient spirit. While the activities, readings, presentations, and materials within Connections will have significant benefit to almost any population, it is particularly suited to working with populations in treatment for substance abuse, abuse and trauma survivors, incarcerated populations, and individuals facing challenging life transitions requiring additional help in developing competence in facilitating interpersonal connection, personal empowerment, development of empathy, and enhancing of self-esteem and self-confidence.

We are planning on it being 8 weeks long and closed because the curriculum builds on itself each week. Next Group starts 4 March 2021, Please send referrals to Emily Russell-Smith or Shae Griffin

Mindfulness/Meditation

Wendy Cary
Th, 12:00-1:00pm, B114, GR4
This weekly experiential group is for all veterans who feel they might benefit from becoming more mindful and aware as they move through their daily life allowing them to make better choices that positively support their health and well-being. Participants will also have the opportunity to explore and practice a variety of meditation techniques to help with issues such as insomnia, pain, and stress.

Transforming Group

Chris Drouillard
Th, 1:00-2:00pm, VVC
This group is for all veterans who struggle with maladaptive coping mechanisms, (addiction of any sorts, eating disorder, emotion regulation, boundaries, and much more) This group meets weekly to provide mutual support and insight. Provider helps veterans by using a variety of therapeutic modalities including CBT, Motivational Interviewing and Group Support.

Pain Management (offered through Telehealth)

Rebekah Kintzing
Th, 2:00-3:00, VVC
This group is for veterans who suffer from chronic pain. This eight-week pain management class is a psycho-educational, skills-focused group that addresses the bio-psycho-social aspects of chronic pain. Veterans learn cognitive behavioral interventions aimed at improved pain management and increased overall functioning and quality of life.

Friday

MHICM Breakfast

MHICM Staff

F, 8:00-10:0 am, Community

This group is for veterans in the MHICM program.

This group encourages healthy social and interpersonal skills.

--The vets need to be referred to the MHICM program before they can attend!

Reasons for Living

Tiffany Foley

F, 9:00am – 10:30am VVC/TELE

This group is for veterans on the High Risk for Suicide List or referred by their provider due to a significant suicide attempt, ongoing suicidal ideation and/or desire to die. This group is part support, part CBT, and Distress Tolerance Skill Building.

SUD Recovery Process Group

Sue Hicks

F, 10:00-11:00 am, Bldg. 23/TELE

1-800-767-1750 CODE: 06837#

Bereavement Group

April Thorndyke

F, 10:00-11:30, VVC

This is a closed cohort 10-week bereavement group that helps individuals normalize the intense impacts of grief and loss. The loss can be from a death of a person and/or any type of loss, identity, role, position, employment, etc. if it has traumatically impacted the life of an individual. It provides a safe and nonjudgmental space, for individuals to process there are emotions and struggles around loss, changes and identity, roles, and relationships. This group enables individuals to learn self-acceptance, self-compassion, resiliency, as they mourn the loss and learn how to embrace the pain that accompanies loss in a way that moves them forward.

MOVE Exercise Class

Mona Randall

F, 11:00-12:30pm, BLDG 54

This group is for veterans wishing to work on weight issues.

This group takes a holistic approach to weight loss and healthy lifestyle changes, focusing on behavioral health, diet, and exercise.

SUD SOBER LIFESTYLES GROUP

Sue Hicks

F, 11:00-12:00, Building 23- (In-person only)

SUD Emotional Regulation Group

Sue Hicks

F, 1:00-2:00 pm, Bldg.23 (In-person only)

MOVE Support Group

Mona Randall

F, 2:00-3:00pm, Bldg. 54

This group is for veterans wishing to work on weight issues.

This group takes a holistic approach to weight loss and healthy lifestyle changes, focusing on behavioral health, diet, and exercise.

SUD Relapse Prevention Group

Sue Hicks

F, 2:00-3:00, Bldg. 23/TELE

1-800-767-1750 CODE: 56544#