

# 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](http://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 ext: 7521

## 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 Roo

# MONDAY

## **SUD Recovery Process Group**

Sue Hicks

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

## **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.

## **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.

## **Dementia Caregiver Support Group**

Luanne Jensen

Mon (4th week), 11:00 a.m. –13:00 p.m., VVC

This is a dementia caregiver support group for veterans or their loved ones. Dementia is a life changing disease that not only impacts those affected, but those who are close to them. This support group is a safe place where caregivers can connect with others who understand the trials and tribulations faced and have an opportunity to develop a mutual support system. Caregivers will have the chance to exchange information and resources, different coping skills used to deal with this life altering disease, share their own feelings, and make new connections.

## **Pain Management (offered through Telehealth)**

Cody Maddox

M, 2:00-3:30pm, GR1

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.

## **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.

## **Relapse Prevention**

Sue Hicks

M 2:00-3:00 pm, Bldg.23/TELE

# MONDAY

## **Advanced Pain Management**

Cody Maddox

M, 2:00-3:30pm, GR1

The chronic pain management program is built around a recovery model that encourages veterans to fully live life despite chronic pain. Veterans that graduate from the pain management group will be able to attend an advanced group aimed at identifying additional resources that can help facilitate their recovery and create structured space that will allow them to talk with other veterans about the recovery process. The intention of the group is to encourage veterans to become more independent during the recovery process. Part of that process is reaching out and helping other veterans. Hence, becoming aware of multiple resources will help veterans act as a "pain peer," reaching out to their fellow service members who are also struggling with chronic pain. These opportunities will be coordinated through the chronic pain program.

## **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](mailto: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

## **Guitars for Veterans Workshop**

Steve Walker

M, 4:30-6:00pm, ON HOLD DUE TO PANDEMIC

Provide brief description:

This Peer led Workshop is aimed at providing Veterans struggling with PTSD and other emotional distress a unique therapeutic alternative. G4V pursues its mission to share the healing power of music by providing free guitar instruction. The weekly (10 Weeks) guitar lessons provided by our volunteers are individualized and designed to help students learn at their own pace while accommodating any physical and/or emotional challenges. More information can be found on this nationally recognized organization at [www.guitars4vets.org](http://www.guitars4vets.org)

## **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.

### **Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)**

Sue Hicks

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

### **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.

### **At Ease Mindfulness Based Yoga**

Cody Maddox

Tu, 1:00 – 2:45 pm or Thursday 2:00 - 3:45 pm

**Check in at Rehab Medicine Building 110 – 1<sup>st</sup> floor for start dates.**

Class Location: Building 29 - Learning Resource Center - 1st floor (west of Rehab Medicine)

This class is for Veterans with chronic pain who:

1. Are motivated and committed to the 8-week program.
2. Are motivated and committed to practicing techniques at home between classes.
3. Can get down/up from the ground with assistance from an object such as a chair if needed.
4. Can tolerate 90 minutes of class participation.

Class starts at 10 minutes after the hour – important to be on time. This class teaches and develops skills that build on each other, so it is essential that you can attend for 8 weeks in a row. Mats provided in class. Wear comfortable clothing and bring a water bottle if desired. Please turn off cell phones.

*\*\*If someone is interested please sign Cody Maddox to your note or an addendum. Veteran will be contacted via telephone about date, time, location. Scheduling is subject to availability in upcoming cohorts.*

### **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.

### **Moral Injury Group**

Chaplin Mikaelson

Tu, 2:30pm-3:30 pm, GR 3 (Hybrid Format)

*Contact Chaplin Mikaelson with referrals*

### **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

### **Pain Management (offered through Telehealth)**

Cody Maddox

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.

### **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.

### **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!

### **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.

## **WEDNESDAY**

### **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

### **Relapse Prevention Group**

Sue Hicks

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

### **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

### **CPT Graduate Group**

Melissa Kremer

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

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

### **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

## **Hepatitis C Education Class**

Patricia Michas and Maryanne Sims

Th (4<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)**

Sue Hicks

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

## **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.

## **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.

## **At Ease Mindfulness Based Yoga**

Cody Maddox

Thursday 2:00 - 3:45 pm or Tuesday 1:00 – 2:45pm

**Check in at Rehab Medicine Building 110 – 1<sup>st</sup> floor for start dates.**

Class Location: Building 29 - Learning Resource Center - 1st floor (west of Rehab Medicine)

This class is for Veterans with chronic pain who:

1. Are motivate and committed to the 8-week program.
2. Are motivated and committed to practicing techniques at home between classes.
3. Can get down/up from the ground with assistance from an object such as a chair if needed.
4. Can tolerate 90 minutes of class participation.

Class starts at 10 minutes after the hour – important to be on time. This class teaches and develops skills that build on each other, so it is essential that you can attend for 8 weeks in a row. Mats provided in class. Wear comfortable clothing and bring a water bottle if desired. Please turn off cell phones.

*\*\*If someone is interested please sign Cody Maddox to your note or an addendum. Veteran will be contacted via telephone about date, time, location. Scheduling is subject to availability in upcoming cohorts.*

## Friday

### **MHICM Breakfast**

MHICM Staff

F, 8:00-10:00 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.

### **Advanced Pain Management**

Cody Maddox

8 weeks

9:30 am – 11:00 a.m. Bldg. 114, GR 1

The chronic pain management program is built around a recovery model that encourages veterans to fully live life despite chronic pain. Veterans that graduate from the pain management group will be able to attend an advanced group aimed at identifying additional resources that can help facilitate their recovery and create structured space that will allow them to talk with other veterans about the recovery process.

The intention of the group is to encourage veterans to become more independent during the recovery process. Part of that process is reaching out and helping other veterans. Hence, becoming aware of multiple resources will help veterans act as a “pain peer,” reaching out to their fellow service members who are also struggling with chronic pain. These opportunities will be coordinated through the chronic pain program.

### **SUD Recovery Process Group**

Sue Hicks

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

### **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.

### **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.

### **Relapse Prevention Group**

Sue Hicks

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