

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

Peer Support – (208) 422-1000 + Option 1 + extension
Daniel Chapman ext: 7629
Cameron Rail ext: 7266
Steve Walker ext: 4543

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 Skills Group

Tom Hogan

M 10:00-11:00 am, Building 114 IN PERSON/TELE
1-833-558-0712 CODE: 276 3326 3805

SUD SOBER LIFESTYLES GROUP

Tom Hogan

M 11:00-12:00, Building 114 (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

Tom Hogan

M 1:00-2:00 pm, Bldg.114 (In-person only)

MONDAY

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

Chaplain Rachel Mikaelsen

M, 1:00pm-2:00pm, (ON-LINE)

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)

Freedom from Emotional Eating Group

Dr. Karlyne Morawe & Dr Tanya Watford

M 1:30pm-3:00pm, VVC

This group is for veterans who engage in unhelpful eating behaviors as a way to address difficult or unwanted experiences. Skills taught in the group are adapted from DBT with the goal of reducing unhelpful eating behaviors used to regulate emotions. The group is held for 9 weeks on Mondays from 1:30 until 3:00pm and is a closed cohort. The next cohort will meet October 18 (Please send referrals to either Dr. Karlyne Morawe or Dr. Tanya Watford).

SUD Relapse Prevention

Tom Hogan

M 2:00-3:00 pm, Building 114 IN PERSON/TELE

1-833-558-0712 CODE: 2762 150 8589

TUESDAY

Vietnam Support Group

Joshua Echeverria

Tu, 10:00 a.m.-11 am, Bldg. 114 GR 1, 2

This group is for Vietnam COMBAT veterans. This group is populated with totally disabled, PTSD/depression/now sober combat veterans. This group provides socialization and supportive psychotherapy. It provides an opportunity to talk about current issues related to relationships, gaining, chronic illness, and to re-examine traumatic experiences (if that is what is needed).

MOVE/Weight Program

Mona Randall

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

This group is for veterans wishing to work on goal of weight loss.

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

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. 114/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.

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, 2:00pm-3:00pm, ongoing (ON-LINE)

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

TUESDAY

**Trauma Symptom Management (PTSD)
Group**

D. Naomi Johnson

T, 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.

WEDNESDAY

Brain Boosters/Brain Health

Dani Binegar

W, 10:30-12:00, Bldg. 23, Rm. 105

The Brain Boosters group is a 9 session, 1.5-hour, skills-based 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 learn how mental health/mental wellness impacts brain functioning. You will also learn how good sleep habits, stress and pain management, healthy eating, and exercise will help your brain.

ACT group

Dr. Watford

W, 1000-1130 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 Skills Group

Tom Hogan

W 10:00-11:00, Bldg. 114/VVC

1-833-558-0712 CODE: 276 3326 3805

Pain Management (offered through Telehealth)

Rebekah Kintzing

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

This class is built to help you live a full and meaningful life by improving overall functioning and quality of life despite pain. You will learn the relationship between persistent pain and mood, thinking, and behaviors, and gain valuable skills to help you better manage your pain and its impact on your life.

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!

SUD SOBER LIFESTYLES GROUP

Tom Hogan

W 11:00-12:00, Building 114 (In-person only)

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

Tom Hogan

W, 1:00-2:00 pm, Bldg.114 (In-person only)

WEDNESDAY

Healthy Teaching Kitchen (MHICM only)

Lea Steiner, 208-422-1000 ext. 7092

Wed, 11:30-12:30PM, In Person

Come join us to learn about cooking and preparing meals, reading recipes and shopping smart. We demonstrate some simple, healthy recipes for your go-to meals.

Healthy Teaching Kitchen

Madison Keller

Wed, 1st and 3rd week 1-2PM VVC

Come join us over VVC to learn about cooking and preparing meals, reading recipes and shopping smart. We demonstrate some simple, healthy recipes for your go-to meals.

SUD Relapse Prevention Group

Tom Hogan

W 2:00-3:00, Bldg. 114/TELE

1-833-558-0712 CODE: 2762 150 8589

STAIR Group

Melissa Kremer / Naomi Johnson

W, 2:00 – 3:00, VVC or BLG 114 (Hybrid)

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, VVC

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,

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.

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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. 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.

Trauma Symptom Management (PTSD) Group

Th 11:00-12:00, VVC or in-person

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 on Thursdays from 11-1200 via VVC or in-person.

SUD Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)

Dave Baumgart

T 11:00-12:00, Bldg. 114/VVC

In person or Video Group:

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

Thursday

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, (In Person Only)

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.

MOVE Support Group

Mona Randall

Thursday, 2:00-3:00pm, VVC

This group is for veterans wishing to work on goal of weight loss.

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

Pain Management (offered through Telehealth)

Rebekah Kintzing

Th, 3:00-4:00, VVC

This class is built to help you live a full and meaningful life by improving overall functioning and quality of life despite pain. You will learn the relationship between persistent pain and mood, thinking, and behaviors, and gain valuable skills to help you better manage your pain and its impact on your life.

Taking Charge of My Life and Health

Ann Trotter

Thursday, 3:00-4:30pm, VVC

In this class we explore what really matters in your life and what brings you joy? You'll take time to explore these questions for your Whole Health, check-in and make goals for you to take charge of your health. Certain times of the year we offer this class for women-Veteran only group to focus on women's health.

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.

SUD Recovery Skills Group

Tom Hogan

F, 10:00-11:00 am, Bldg. 114/TELE

1-833-558-0712 CODE: 276 3326 3805

Bereavement Group

April Thorndyke

F, 10:00-11:30, VVC

Starts October 29th, 2021

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.

SUD SOBER LIFESTYLES GROUP

Tom Hogan

F, 11:00-12:00, Building 114 (In-person only)

CBT-D group

Jessamyn Brown and Amanda Pentland

F, 1:00-2:30pm, VVC

The overall goal of CBT-D is to improve symptoms of depression by helping the Veteran to develop strategies to help balanced unhelpful thoughts, emotions and by helping them spend more time engaging in pleasurable or productive activities. The group will learn to apply real-life skills to cope with problems that come, even after therapy has ended. The group will be open to new participants every four weeks. If you have patients who would be a good fit for CBT-D, please cosign us onto a note.

Diabetes Basics Group

Margaret Grosvenor

F, 1:00-2:30, VVC

Our Diabetes team will teach you about healthy eating, Mediterranean diet, medications, foot care, exercise, and taking care of your whole health to grab the reigns on your diabetes.

SUD Emotional Regulation Group

Tom Hogan

F, 1:00-2:00 pm, Bldg.114 (In-person only)

SUD Relapse Prevention Group

Tom Hogan

F, 2:00-3:00, Bldg. 114/TELE

1-833-558-0712 CODE: 2762 150 8589