

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:
[Mental Health Care | VA Boise Health Care | Veterans Affairs](#)

VA Providers: This document can be located on the BH SharePoint, Shared Documents:
S:\Mental Health\BH Group Guide

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

Cari Sylvia ext: 7629

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

Miguel A.

M 10:00-11:00 am, VVC or Building 114

Contact your case manager or Miguel A. to get on the list at 208-422-1000 x7770

SUD SOBER LIFESTYLES GROUP

Miguel A.

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.

SUD Emotional Regulation Group

Miguel A.

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

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 January 2023. (Please send referrals to either Dr. Karlyne Morawe or Dr. Tanya Watford).

SUD Relapse Prevention

Nichole Herold.

M 2:00-3:00 pm, Building 114

Emotions Group

April Thorndyke

M, 2pm-3pm, VVC

This is an open cohort group that supports individuals in learning a variety of skills to cope with emotional distress in productive ways. It can be a great option for individuals who do not meet criteria for 32-week DBT group or desire a therapeutic place for the following: develop and fine tune skills (CBT and DBT) to improve mood and reduce symptoms, acceptance, using value aligned decisions, develop and practice positive psychology, and work from Brene Brown on vulnerability, courage, shame, etc. Participants will learn to apply real-life skills to live a healthy and meaningful life. If you have Veterans who would be a good fit, please cosign April Thorndyke, LSCW onto a note.

Trauma Symptom Management

Morgan Robinson, LMSW

Mondays from 2:30 to 3:30 via VVC

Open cohort

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 10 weeks on Mondays from 2:30 to 3:30pm.

Whole Health group Taking Charge of my Life and Health

Julie Orozco

M 5:00pm-6:30pm, VVC

This class is an engaging and fun opportunity to give veterans a chance to reflect on what really matters to them and what they want their health for. Veterans are encouraged to choose an area of their lives that they want to enhance and develop a plan for carrying out goals and actions. Nine-week course Mondays at 5pm and Fridays at 3pm. Contact Julie Orozco if you have interested veterans.

TUESDAY

Vietnam Support Group

Joshua Echeverria, LCSW

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). To refer a veteran, please first verify that they did deploy to Vietnam and then contact Josh Echeverria to refer.

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.

Written Exposure Therapy Group

Dr. April Rose

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

This is an open enrollment group for Veterans with co-occurring PTSD and substance use disorders. Any Veteran who wishes to attend the group will need to be screened through the SUD or PTSD clinic. Please contact Dr. April Rose for referrals or questions.

SUD Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)

Nichole Herold.

T 11:00-12:00, VVC

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Questioning + (LGBTQ+) Support Group

Susie Klepacki

Tu, 12pm-1pm, Hybrid VVC & in-person

This support group offers LGBTQ+ 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.

Moral Injury Group

Chaplain Howarth and Dr. Morawe

T, 1:00pm-2:30pm (Virtual)

Veterans will learn what moral injury is and how to move toward self-forgiveness after experiencing or witnessing an event that goes against their values or moral beliefs. This group is a closed cohort and will run for 12 weeks. Please contact Chaplain Howarth or Dr. Morawe for more information or to get enrolled for the next cohort.

TUESDAY

Introduction to Pain Management “Boot Camp”

Rebekah Kintzing, PsyD and Ann Wildman, RT
Tu, 1300 – 1430 (via VVC)

This is a four-week introduction to cognitive-behavioral pain management skills co-led by Psychology and Recreational Therapy.

Veterans will be provided psychoeducation on pain mechanics and have the opportunity to learn and engage in a variety of active coping skills that include mindfulness, self-regulation, physical pacing of activities, re-integrating leisure, cognitive coping, and gratitude.

MHICM (Family Group)

Chalice Silflow

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

Must be in MHICM Program

Trauma Symptom Management (PTSD) Group

Jessamyn A. Brown

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.

Written Exposure Therapy group

D. Naomi Johnson

T, 5:30pm-6:30pm,

Information about this group will be updated soon. Any veteran that wishes to attend this group will need to be screened through the PTSD clinic, please contact Naomi Johnson for referrals and questions.

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 Process Group

Miguel A.

W 10:00-11:00, VVC or Building 114

Contact your case manager or Miguel A. to get on the list at 208-422-1000 x7770

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Chronic Pain

Rebekah Kintzing

W, 10:30-12:00pm, 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.

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

Miguel A.

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

Miguel A.

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

WEDNESDAY

Healthy Teaching Kitchen (MHICM only)

Lea Steiner, 208-422-1000 ext. 7092

W, 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

Nichole Herold.

W 2:00-3:00 pm, Building 114

SUD Recovery Process Group

Miguel A.

W 2:00-3:00, VVC or Building 114

Contact your case manager or Miguel A. to get on the list at 208-422-1000 x7770

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

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!

Thursday

WRAP® Wellness Recovery Action Plan

Steve Walker, Dan Chapman, Cameron Rail, Cari Sylvia

9am-4pm, Bldg. 23 Room #105,

Thursday and Friday

Offered – April 13-14, 2023

June 8-9, 2023

August 10-11, 2023

October 12-13, 2023

This Peer Support-lead, two-day workshop explores and develops a Copeland Center approved & versatile strategy for working through recovery to wellness using a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP®). It employs the concepts of Hope, Self-Responsibility, Education, Self-Advocacy, and Support. This workshop is for people who experience mental health and other challenges and who want to take control of their lives.

Introduction to Pain Management “Boot Camp”

Rebekah Kintzing, PsyD and Ann Wildman, RT
Th, 0900 – 1030 (via VVC)

This is a four-week introduction to cognitive-behavioral pain management skills co-led by Psychology and Recreational Therapy.

Veterans will be provided psychoeducation on pain mechanics and have the opportunity to learn and engage in a variety of active coping skills that include mindfulness, self-regulation, physical pacing of activities, re-integrating leisure, cognitive coping, and gratitude.

Community Based Employment Services (CBES)

Allen Willard

Th, 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

Destinee Stoeger

Th, 11:00-12:00 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 the group. The group is held for 10 weeks.

SUD Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)

Nichole Herold.

Th 11:00-12:00, VVC

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.

CBT-D group

Jessie Brown, LCSW and Amanda Pentland, LCSW

Th, 1:00-2:30 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.

Female MST Survivor Group

Provider: Sarah Kearney, LCSW

Thursday 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. (VVC)

This group serves as an opportunity to explore and address the impact MST has had in the participant's life. Unresolved issues will be addressed, including but not limited to anger, telling others about trauma, relationship and intimacy issues, grief and loss, institutional betrayal, trust issues, coping with strong emotions, self-esteem and moving forward. This group is ongoing and not time limited. The curriculum is 12 weeks, but participants can join at any time.

STAIR Group

Melissa Kremer / Naomi Johnson

Th, 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.

MOVE Support Group

Mona Randall

Th, 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.

Thursday

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

Th, 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!

WRAP® Wellness Recovery Action Plan

Steve Walker, Dan Chapman, Cameron Rail, Cari Sylvia

9am-4pm, Bldg. 23 Room #105,

Thursday and Friday

Offered – April 13-14, 2023

June 8-9, 2023

August 10-11, 2023

October 12-13, 2023

This Peer Support-lead, two-day workshop explores and develops a Copeland Center approved & versatile strategy for working through recovery to wellness using a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP®). It employs the concepts of Hope, Self-Responsibility, Education, Self-Advocacy, and Support. This workshop is for people who experience mental health and other challenges and who want to take control of their lives.

SUD Peer Support Recovery Process Group

Dan Chapman

F 10:00-11:00, VVC or Building 114

Contact your case manager or Miguel A. to get on the list at 208-422-1000 x7770

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

Miguel A.

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

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.

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.

SUD Emotional Regulation Group

Miguel A.

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

SUD Relapse Prevention

Nichole Herold.

F 2:00-3:00 pm, Building 114

Whole Health group Taking Charge of my Life and Health

Julie Orozco

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

This class is an engaging and fun opportunity to give veterans a chance to reflect on what really matters to them and what they want their health for. Veterans are encouraged to choose an area of their lives that they want to enhance and develop a plan for carrying out goals and actions. Nine-week course Mondays at 5pm and Fridays at 3pm. Contact Julie Orozco if you have an interested veteran.

PRINCIPLES OF RECOVERY



VA Staff:

- Offer meaningful choices of care
- Protect Veterans' rights & dignity

Veteran:

- Respect the courage it takes for change to happen
- Accept & commit to change

VA Staff:

- Believe recovery is real
- Focus on abilities, not disabilities

Veteran:

- Believe recovery can & does happen
- Learn from your success

VA Staff:

- Assist Veterans with their own goals
- Respond to Veterans' needs & preferences

Veteran:

- Be an active participant in your own recovery
- Explore new possibilities

VA Staff:

- Recognize recovery is an individualized process
- Work with Veterans whenever they are in the change process

Veteran:

- Believe growth comes from working through setbacks
- Learn & practice new ways of coping

VA Staff:

- Support recovery through unique strengths in each Veteran
- Advocate for Veterans & their families

Veteran:

- Commit to your own wellness
- Advocate for yourself & fellow Veterans

VA Staff:

- Attend to Veterans' basic needs
- Connect Veterans to community resources

Veteran:

- Attend to your physical, spiritual & mental health
- Include at least one special person in your recovery journey

VA Staff:

- Provide a welcoming and safe environment of care
- Maintain confidentiality

Veteran:

- Speak about what works for you & what doesn't
- Develop your community of trust

VA Staff:

- Encourage support among Veterans
- Develop community partnership

Veteran:

- Seek help from your providers
- Share your experiences with other Veterans in recovery

VA Staff:

- Honor Veterans' values, traditions, & beliefs
- Recognize & challenge your own stigmas

Veteran:

- Look into your cultural values & beliefs for guidance
- Seek support from your communities

VA Staff:

- Empower Veterans
- Involve Veterans' loved ones whenever possible

Veteran:

- Involve families & friends in your care
- Give back to your community

