 Choose My Therapy

Workshop

So you are thinking about therapy?

**READ BEFORE ATTENDING APPOINTMENT**

Choose My Therapy is a one-session workshop designed to:

* Streamline the therapy referral process and efficiently match veterans with the therapy of their choosing
* Encourage veterans to take an active role in their mental health treatment
* Provide education about effective therapy options to help veterans make an informed choice
* Enhance motivation and develop concrete therapy targets/goals

This Workshop is not a standalone treatment, but an *entry* into therapy.

**When:** Monday, 9:30 – 10:30 AM, Tuesday 1:00 -2:00 PM or Thursday 9:30- 10:30AM

**How to attend:** The workshop is virtual. You will receive an email with a link that you will click on to join the video conference. On the date of the workshop, click the link about 5 minutes prior to the appointment. Note that although a phone-in option exists for VA video appts, this class is conducted by **video only**. **Please have this packet printed or opened on a computer prior to the appointment. You DO NOT need to fill these sheets out ahead of time.** IMPORTANT: If you do not see the video conference email in your inbox be sure to check your spam folder.

Karlin, B. E., & Wenzel, A. (2018). Evidence-based psychotherapy shared decision-making toolkit for mental health providers. Waltham, MA: Education Development Center, Inc. Adapted by RHJ Providers.

**Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center – Guidelines for VA Video Connect (VVC)**

1. When signing on to VA Video Connect you will be asked to enter your **name** and **contact information**. Please enter your first name and the first letter of your last name. Also, please enter your location so that we can assist you in the event of an emergency.
2. If you are using your own device for VVC appointments, try to connect with wi-fi; Verizon and T-Mobile are free to use if you are using 4G.
3. TeleMental Health into the Home, also known as VA Video Connect, is not a suitable modality for everyone. You and/or your provider may determine services may be better offered via in-person or over TeleMental Health to a clinic.
4. If there are continuous difficulties with technology (audio/video) VVC may not be an option for you; alternatives will be given to you.
5. **Treat your VVC appointment just as you would a regular doctor’s appointment at the hospital or clinic.**  Be on time or notify your provider if you will be late or unable to attend. This includes wearing proper attire, conducting the sessions seated in an upright position (not lying down/in bed).
6. Ensure you have **removed possible distractions during session**: Cell phones should be turned off or on vibrate (do not text during session, do not e-mail, use the internet, or engage in any other activities on the computer during sessions); turn off televisions and radios; places pets in another room.
7. Due to the private nature of mental health appointments, you should be alone (no family or friends), unless otherwise agreed upon with your mental health provider**. Please have sessions in a private room**.
8. Be sure to **put your device at eye level** and on a solid surface vs. holding during the session to reduce distractions. Place device in a position to where the provider can consistently see your face.
9. Please be sure to have your **devices fully charged** prior to your scheduled appointment and or plugged into a power source.
10. If you are using your own device and it is an Apple IOS product, you will need to download for free “VA Video Connect” from the App Store. This will ensure that the call is secure and private (encrypted). This software will take up a certain amount of space on your device.
11. Put any other devices connected to the internet to “airplane mode.” If using your phone, put “do not disturb” on so the session does not get interrupted.
12. Do not attend sessions while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. No smoking during session.

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| **Pros and Cons of Therapy** | |
| **Pros of Therapy** | **Cons of No Therapy** |
| **Examples:**  I could start enjoying fishing again.  I could do more things with my kids. | **Examples:**  I won’t be able to keep a job because my irritability gets in the way.  I won’t be able to make it to my son’s first football game. |
| **My Therapy Goals** | |
| **My *primary* therapy goal is:**  **Example:** To not feel so anxious in public or around people I don’t know  **I will know I achieved this goal if:**  **Example:** I can go to an event like dinner with my friends and not have to leave early | |
| **My Between-Session Assignments** | |
| 1. I will complete Page 4 of this worksheet and bring it back with me to my next group session. | |
| 1. I will attend the next workshop to learn a helpful coping skill on:   \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |

Read through all the therapy options related to your symptoms on pages 5-8. After, answer the questions below:

1. What could get in my way of effectively completing therapy?

(Ex: work schedule, not interested in homework)

1. What are 3 of my strengths that will help when therapy is challenging?

(Ex: Openness to feedback, willingness to try anything)

1. Based on my current therapy goals, weekly availability, and readiness, which specific therapy would I like to engage in? (See pages 5-12)

First Line Treatment: Structured Therapy Protocol

In many cases, options below are offered individually, in a class, by video, and in-person

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Primary Symptoms | Therapy Name | Description of Therapy |
| Overwhelming feelings of sadness, hopelessness, withdrawing from others, lack of activity or motivation, etc. | Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Depression (CBT-D) | CBT-D explores the relationship between thoughts and emotions and focuses on changing thoughts and behaviors to improve mood (12-16 weeks).  [CBT-D Brochure](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/cbt_brochure.pdf) |
| Chronic uncontrollable worry about everyday life, panic episodes, OCD, etc. | Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Anxiety (CBT-A) | CBT-A explores the relationship between thoughts and emotions and focuses on changing thoughts and behaviors to reduce the fears and worry (8-12 weeks). |
| Substance use | Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Substance Use Disorders (CBT-SUD) | CBT-SUD explores the relationship between thoughts and emotions and focuses on changing thoughts and behaviors to make and maintain changes to substance uses and improve overall quality of life (12 weeks)  [CBT-SUD Information](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/substance-use/treatment.asp) |
| Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET) for Alcohol and/or Substance Use | MET helps to elicit and strengthen motivation for change. It involves a brief assessment followed by a conversation with your provider aimed at helping you decide what changes, if any, you would like to make in your alcohol and/or other substance use (2-4 monthly sessions).  [MET Information](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/substance-use/treatment.asp) |
| Avoiding trauma reminders (e.g., specific places/situations/  memories), nightmares, intrusive memories, etc.  PTSD treatment [Decision Aid Tool](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/decisionaid/) | Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) | CPT focuses on decreasing symptoms of PTSD by exploring the relationship between thoughts and emotions. Veterans work through trauma beliefs related to safety, trust, power/control, esteem, and intimacy (12 weeks).  [CPT Information](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/txessentials/cpt_for_ptsd_pro.asp) |
| Prolonged Exposure (PE) | PE helps veterans regain control of their lives by helping veteran’s approach trauma-related thoughts, feelings, and situations that tend to be avoided due to the distress they cause. Methods used include exposure to real-world reminders of trauma and talking through the trauma memory (8-15 weeks).  [PE Information](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/aboutface/therapies/pe.html) |
|  | Prolonged Exposure in Primary Care (PE-PC) | Brief PE (4-6 sessions, 30 minutes each) |
|  | Research therapies | Our Research Team has a variety of options of studies. Some include trauma therapy or medication. Some are specifically for MST survivors. |
| Sleep problems | Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) | CBT-I focuses on changing thoughts and behaviors to help with difficulties falling and staying asleep (6 weeks). Starts with our one-time, one-hour VVC Healthy Sleep Class. |
| Chronic pain | Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Chronic Pain (CBT-CP) | CBT-CP focuses on changing thoughts and behaviors to improve pain management and quality of life (12 weeks). [CBT-CP Brochure](https://www.va.gov/PAINMANAGEMENT/CBT_CP/docs/CBT-CP-PatientBrochure-PrintVersion.pdf) |
| Relationship conflict | Integrative Behavioral Couples Therapy (IBCT) | IBCT reduces conflict and encourages intimacy through acceptance and skills strategies. Completed together with partner. 12-26 weeks. VVC |
| Body image or food related distress | Intuitive Eating Group | For those struggling with body/weight/food-related issues looking to learn how to make peace with food from a non-diet perspective. IE covers topics to include rejecting diet mentality, honoring hunger & fullness, body respect & learning coping skills without using food. This group is not appropriate for Veterans with an active eating disorder. 12 weeks; **Tuesdays** @ 1300. VVC |
|  | Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Eating Disorders | Individual therapy with our specialty team |

Second Line Treatment: Coping Skills Class

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Primary Symptoms | Therapy Name | | Description of Therapy | | |
|  |  | |  | | |
| Avoiding trauma reminders (e.g., specific places/situations/  memories), nightmares, intrusive memories, etc. | | Skills Training Trauma Class | | This group is geared specifically towards helping individuals who have experienced traumatic events develop better coping skills. **Wednesdays** at 5pm for 8 weeks. VVC |
|  | | Skills Training Trauma Class for Women | | **Tuesdays** at 10am for 8 weeks. VVC |
|  | | Women’s Health and Healing After Trauma Group | | Group for female survivors of sexual trauma designed to enhance trauma recovery skills with an overall emphasis on general health and wellbeing. 15 weeks; **Thursday** @ 1300 x 15 sessions. VVC |
| Anxiety | | Confronting Anxiety Class | | Veterans will increase their knowledge of stress and learn different skills in order to improve healthy functioning. Domains covered will be mindfulness, emotion regulation, distress tolerance, and healthy communication.  **Mondays** at 3:30pm for 5 weeks. VVC |
| Depression | | Coping with Depression Class | | Based on CBT-D. **Thursdays** 11am for 6 weeks. VVC |
| General distress (anxiety, depression, difficulty coping with stressors) | | Mindfulness Meditation Class | | Led by our Peer Support Specialist. **Wednesdays** 3:30pm. VVC |
|  | |  | | With [WRIISC team](https://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/) by phone, **Fridays** at 11am-12pm, call in from home: 1-800-767-1750 with Access Code 54220# |
|  | | Yoga Nidra Class | | With [WRIISC team](https://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/) by phone, **Thursdays** at 8pm, call in from home: 1-800-767-1750 Access code: 24953# or by video via Zoom, **Tuesdays** at 7pm; enter meeting ID 783 6770 3867 |
|  | | Self Esteem Class | | Led by our Peer Support Specialist. **Thursdays** at 3:30pm. VVC |
|  | | Moral Injury Group | | Currently full. VVC |
|  | | Women’s Stress Management | | Focus on improving stress mgmt and connecting with other women. **Thurs** 1-2p, x 9 mtgs. VVC |
| Chronic pain | | Chronic Pain Workshop | | **Mondays** 1 pm. VVC |
|  | | Women’s Chronic Pain Management Group | | **Mondays** 1-2pm for 10 weeks. VVC |
| Substance use | | Tobacco Cessation | | Ask for more information |
|  | | STAR Program services | | Intensive Outpatient Program at SAV for recovery from substance dependence. Ask for more information |
|  | | Research therapies | | Psychotherapy for individuals and couples with PTSD and alcohol dependence; may include medication. VVC |
| Anger | | Anger Management Class | | Anger management explores the relationship between thoughts and emotions and focuses on increasing awareness of triggers, changing thoughts and behaviors to reduce anger/irritability and learn more helpful ways to respond to anger (10-week therapy). [AIMS Brochure](https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/aims/media/AIMSFactSheet_high_res.pdf)  7 sessions. VVC. |
| LGBTQ | | LGBTQ+ Support Group for Veterans | | First and third **Fridays**, 3:30-4:30. VVC |
|  | | PRIDE in All Who Served | | Fri 12:30-1:30. VVC. |
| Aging & memory | | Memory & Aging Class | | Runs a few times a year. VVC. |
| Relationship distress | | Couples Communication Skills Group | | **Tues** 3pm, 6 sessions, VVC |
| Intimacy | | Women’s Sexual Health and Empowerment Group | | Focus on developing and enhancing ability to experience sexual pleasure, independence, connection, safety, pleasure, and assertiveness. **Wed** 11a x 8 sessions, VVC |
| Racial injustice | | Race-Based Stress & Trauma (RBST) Group | | Health education group designed to provide education and support to Veterans of Color (e.g., self-identified as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latin, Indigenous/Native American, Asian/Asian American, and Middle Eastern/Arab/North African) who are impacted by Racial Injustice. **Tues**, 10-11:30, 8 sessions. |

Third Line Treatment: Coping Skills, Self-Guided

Mobile phone apps are available so that you can build coping skills completely on your own schedule. Comprehensive list of VA Mobile Apps for Mental Health: [VA Mobile Apps](https://mobile.va.gov/appstore/mental-health)

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| Primary  Symptoms | |  | Description | |
| Social support | Coffee and Connect Group | | | Led by our Peer Support Specialist. **Mondays** at 8:30 am. VVC | |
|  | Wellness Walk Group | | | Led by our Peer Support Specialist. **Wednesdays** at 8am | |
| Sleep problems | CBT-I Coach app | | | App store | |
|  | Path to Better Sleep for Veterans | | | Online module. [www.VeteranTraining.va.gov/Insomnia](http://www.VeteranTraining.va.gov/Insomnia) | |
| Anger | AIMS for Anger Management | | | Online module. [www.veterantraining.va.gov/aims](http://www.veterantraining.va.gov/aims) | |
| General distress (Anxiety, depression, difficulty coping with stressors) | Mindfulness Coach app  Mood Coach app  COVID Coach app | | | App store | |
|  | Moving Forward: Overcoming Life’s Challenges | | | Online module. [www.VeteranTraining.va.gov/MovingForward](http://www.VeteranTraining.va.gov/MovingForward) | |
|  | My Recovery Plan | | | Online module. <https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/recovery/index.asp> | |
| Relationship distress | Couples Coach app | | | App store | |
|  | OurRelationship.com | | | Click Military & Veteran Couples for free option | |
| Whole Health / Complementary and Integrative Health | Acupuncture or Acupressure | | | Talk with us for more information | |
|  | Tai Chi Class | | | Video class through RHJ Whole Health | |
|  | Mindfulness meditation and Yoga nidra (iRest) | | | Phone class, **Fri** 11am, **Tues** 5p, **Thurs** 8p through WRIISC | |
|  | Guided Imagery Class | | | Video class through RHJ Whole Health. Every other **Monday** 3-4pm. | |
|  | Introduction to Whole Health Class | | | One-time 2-hour class. **Monday** morning. VVC | |
|  | Taking Charge of My Life and Health Class | | | **Tuesdays** 9-10am, x 9-10 wks. Explores personal health goals and topics on values, well-being, self-care, and complementary therapies (acupuncture, etc). Intro to WH is the prerequisite class (not mandatory). VVC | |



# **Good Resources to Have**

## For Women Veterans

* Women Veteran Call Center: [Trust her to find answers - Women Veterans Health Care (va.gov)](https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/programoverview/wvcc.asp)

## Military Sexual Trauma

* [Beyond MST](https://mobile.va.gov/app/beyond-mst) app (also in the app store)

## VBA Benefits

* Georgia Department of Veteran Services (appointment only)
  + Miguel 9129200214 ext. 412191
  + Shannon 9129200214 ext. 412193
* <https://www.va.gov/disability/get-help-filing-claim/>

## Miscellaneous

* Enroll in MyHealtheVet [premium](https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/upgrading-your-my-healthevet-account-through-in-person-or-online-authentication), which is free, to have access to Secure Messaging with your healthcare providers
* Ask VA online question portal: <https://ask.va.gov>; 1-800-MyVA411
* Download the [VA Welcome Kit](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxOTUsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjA5MDguNjMzOTMwNTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy52YS5nb3Yvd2VsY29tZS1raXQvP3V0bV9zb3VyY2U9Zm9vdGVyJnV0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX2NhbXBhaWduPVZldFJlc291cmNlcyJ9.9j3UabOR84DeZegNFHJ1gsFlbJWDPVfQRoGz2m-0pwo%2Fs%2F982237416%2Fbr%2F143692540646-l&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cef565e464e694abff08408da93536b5c%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C637984283872191566%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=hYbbG%2BJXJojRzSM4MUzghlUhHc5cpktikv50gKSf5R0%3D&reserved=0)