**PRRC**

**DESCRIPTION of CLASSES**



**Blueprint for Success**

**Type of Group: Closed**

**Class Description:**

Do you experience feelings and symptoms that are upsetting, that keep you from being the way you want to be and doing the things you want to do? Many people who have troubling emotional, psychiatric, or physical symptoms have made great advances in learning how to do things to help themselves get well and stay well. One of the most frustrating stages of recovering your health is when you realize that you can do many things to help yourself stay well but you can’t figure out a way to do them regularly. The Blueprint for Success class can help you create a unique wellness plan to meet your needs and manage your obstacles more effectively.

Blueprint for Success helps you:

* Puts your Mental Health Recovery tools into action
* Empowers you to take charge of the things in your control and builds your confidence and self esteem
* Gain greater awareness into your triggers and warning signs
* Manage your stressors more effectively
* Discover ways to increase your support system and address how they can help you on your recovery path
* Work closely with peers in a supportive environment
* Get more connected and active in your life

Topics discussed in the class:

1. Recovery Tools
2. Developing a Wellness Plan
3. Establishing Positive Routines
4. Recognizing and coping with triggers
5. Identifying Early Warning Signs
6. Strategies to recognize and cope with stressors
7. Crisis Planning
8. Putting it all together and making a unique Wellness Plan for YOU!

**Brain Tactics**

**Type of Group: Closed**

**Class Description:**

Do you find yourself forgetting things, having a tough time paying attention, and staying organized? You’re not alone! There are so many strategies to help boost your memory, concentration, organization, and problem-solving skills. The Brain Tactics class can help you overcome these issues and stay on track.

Brain Tactics helps you:

* Practice memory strategies
* Keep your daily tasks organized
* Break down tasks into a set of logical steps to make them easier
* Learn to prioritize tasks
* Focus on conversations more effectively
* Learning and remembering information more effectively
* Solve problems and be more flexible in your thinking

Topics discussed in the class:

1. Memory Strategies (Calendars, lists, linking tasks)
2. Conversational Attention
3. Task Attention
4. Learning and Memory Strategies
5. Cognitive Flexibility and Problem-Solving Strategies
6. Planning Strategies
7. Putting it all together

**community Connections workshop**

**Type of Group: Rolling admissions**

**Class Description:**

These unique workshops are focused on encouraging PRRC participants to participate more in their community because we recognize that getting out and doing fun things in your community can be challenging. It can also be very fulfilling! This workshop is designed to bring a group of people together who have similar interests. Each workshop series is 2-4 sessions in length and topics are selected by our PRRC participants. Each workshop is centered on a variety of fun, recreational, or leisure activities.

The workshop planning group will:

1. plan an outing
2. practice the activity together first, and
3. then go out to enjoy some fun together

Together, we will also problem-solve some areas that make it difficult to participate in community activities. These barriers to community participation could be:

* lack of money,
* difficulties with transportation,
* nervousness with new activities or crowds, etc.

If you have an idea for a community activity, we’d love to hear it! Drop it in our suggestion box in the front lobby or talk with your provider.

 **Benefits of the Community Connections Workshop:**

* Meet other peers from the VA who have similar interests
* Brainstorm ideas of fun, affordable things to do
* Learn how to break down an activity into easy steps
* Practice the activity with peers in a “dress rehearsal”
* Plan a similar outing in a place of your choosing!

**Dual diagnosis**

**Type of Group: Closed**

**Class Description:**

The Dual Diagnosis Class is designed to help those with a co-occurrence of mental illness and substance use.

This class will provide:

* education and information needed to identify and cope with triggers
* provide ways to take care of yourself
* help you create more meaning in your life



Areas discussed in the class:

* Facts about Dual Diagnoses
* Advantages/Disadvantages of Using Substances
* Stages of Change
* When Substance Controls You
* Asking for Help
* Honesty
* Dynamics of Family
* Healthy Relationships
* Triggers and Coping
* Recovery Thinking
* Create Meaning
* Self-Care

The primary teaching tools for this class will be educational handouts, interactive discussions, in-class activities, and at-home practice assignments.

**FAce Stigma**

**Type of Group: Closed**

**Class Description:**

What is Self/Internalized-Stigma, and what are its impacts?

Self-Stigma occurs when people believe negative stereotypes about individuals with mental health problems are true of themselves.

Some possible consequences of internalized stigma include:

* Feeling embarrassment for having a mental illness, although it is not your fault
* Low self-esteem / beating yourself up
* Anger at yourself
* Depression, isolation, fear or disinterest of trying new things
* Having lowered expectations for your future

Topics discussed in the class:

1. What is Public Stigma vs. Internalized Sigma?
2. Internalization and Automatic Thoughts
3. Completing the 3 C’s: Catch it, Check it, Change it
4. Strengthening Your Self
5. Increasing Belonging Part I: The Importance of Belonging and Positive Connections with Others
6. Increasing Belonging Part II: Family and Friends
7. Discrimination: Dealing with Stigma from Others
8. Course Recap
9. Taking Your Next Step

**Illness Management and Recovery (IMR)**

**Type of Group: Rolling admissions**

**Class Description:**

The key goal of the Illness Management & Recovery (IMR) class is to gain a better understanding of mental illnesses and strategies for effectively managing your symptoms for mental health recovery.

Each session will be structured in the following manner:

1) review of previous at-home practice assignment

2) introduction and class discussion of new material; and

3) assignment of next at-home practice to help strength new knowledge and skills

Some areas that will be covered by the class are:

* Mental Health Recovery Strategies
* Education on Your Diagnosis
* Using Medications Effectively
* Building Social Supports
* Reducing Relapses
* Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques
* Coping with Problems and Persistent Symptoms

The primary teaching tools for this class will be educational handouts, interactive discussions, in-class activities, and at-home practice assignments. To get the most out of the class, it will be important for you to attend sessions, actively participate, and complete the assignments on a regular basis.

**Let’s Talk**

**Type of Group: Closed**

**Class Description:**

A class geared for participants to meet their PRRC peers and build their confidence up connecting to others.

 Initially, the class will emphasize social skills by having participants practice talking to their peers in session with the facilitator’s guidance.

Areas that will be covered by the class are:

* How to start, maintain and end conversations
* Assertive skills and how to set good boundaries
* How to build and maintain friendships
* Social platforms to help stay connected like Facebook, emails, texts, and Zoom.

 Additionally, we will have fun activities and homework to promote the skills that we are learning.

As we near the end of the class, we will encourage participants to reach out to each other on their own and to share with the class how the experience went. Participants will ultimately learn to build their social skills confidence up in a safe environment through practice and peer feedback.

**Mindfulness**

**Type of Group: Closed**

**Class Description:**

The key goal of Mindfulness is to become more mindful and aware of your body, thoughts, emotions, sensations, and behaviors.

Through this class you will:

* Learn mindfulness skills to handle painful thoughts and emotions effectively, so they have less impact and influence upon your daily functioning.
* Learn to pay better attention to what you are thinking and experiencing in *each moment*.
* Learn the importance of acceptance and developing a non-judging attitude. Rather than pushing away painful thoughts and experiences, you will learn to "make space" for these thoughts and experiences so that you can live a richer, fuller life.

Some areas that will be covered by the class are:

* Living Mindfully in the Moment
* Acceptance
* Non-Judging
* Letting go of Negative Thoughts
* Meditation
* And much more…

The primary teaching tools for this class will be educational handouts, peer discussions, and in class mindfulness exercises. Homework will be assigned at each session to help strengthen the skills. To get the most out of the class, it will be important to attend and complete your homework on a regular basis.

**Money $marts**

**Type of Group: Closed**

**Class Description:**

Money $marts is a financial education program for people living with and in recovery from mental illness.

The class is designed to help individuals better manage their finances so that they are free to pursue their recovery goals such as stable housing, education, and employment.

Money $marts will use the curriculum, "Financial Education for Persons in Recovery," which is a condensed adaptation of two longer curricula developed by the University of Illinois Extension, "All My Money" and "Your Money and Your Life."

**Topics include**:

* Identifying Financial Goals
* Tracking and Managing Expenses
* Managing Debt
* Understanding Credit
* Using Financial Institutions
* Building Savvy Consumer Skills

**Living with Purpose**

**Type of Group: Closed**

**Class Description:**

Living with Purpose group designed for people dealing with symptoms of depression, though a diagnosis of depression is not required to participate. This group uses concepts of behavioral activation to help participants reduce symptoms of depression by identifying enjoyable and/or meaningful activities and setting small manageable goals to increase these activities in daily life. Increasing these activities can help improve mood, confidence, and self-esteem and reduce symptoms of depression.

Some topics to be covered are:

* Understanding symptoms of depression
* Exploring daily activity levels
* Setting SMART Goals
* Engaging social support

**pEER EMPOWERMENT**

**Type of Group: Rolling Admissions**

**Class Description:**

The key goal of Empowerment is to improve your self-confidence and ability to take a more active role in your life. Through the class activities, you will have the opportunity to teach and learn from your peers how to take greater charge of your life and mental health recovery.

Some areas that will be covered by the class are:

* Self-Esteem and Strengths
* Tossing out “Old Baggage”
* Core Beliefs of Recovery
* Assertiveness Skills
* Decision Making
* Saying “No”
* Reducing Critical Thoughts
* Stigma Education and How to Combat Stigma
* Self-Sabotage
* Problem-Solving
* Preventing Relapses

The primary teaching tool for this class will be educational handouts, interactive discussions, and in-class activities. To get the most out of the class, it will be important for you to attend and actively participate in the sessions on a regular basis.

**Positive Self**

**Type of Group: Closed**

**Class Description:**

The key goal of Positive-Self is to learn to build better confidence in oneself. The class will focus on using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Mindfulness techniques to help individuals challenge their negative beliefs and improve their self-worth.

Research shows that having better self-esteem may:

* help you get along better with others,
* help you set and achieve specific goals,
* help you think and act according to your values,
* help you work on problems with confidence, and
* attain higher levels of success in most things you do.

Some areas that will be covered by the class are:

* Identifying and Catching your Inner Critic
* Learning about Unhelpful Thinking Patterns
* Examining the Evidence for Your Thoughts
* Practicing how to Reframe Thoughts
* Practicing Gratitude
* Self-Compassion

The primary teaching tools for this class will be educational handouts, in-class exercises, and peer discussions. Homework will be assigned in between sessions to help strengthen the skills. To get the most out of the class, it will be important to attend and complete your homework on a regular basis.

**Relationships**

**Type of Group: Closed**

**Class Description:**

The Relationships Class is **NOT** just about romantic relationships. Rather, the key goal of the class is to learn how to improve your relationship with yourself, peers, family members, significant others, and providers.

Areas covered in this class include:

* Identifying and Understanding Aspects of Yourself
* Relationship Goals and Beliefs
* Emotional Intelligence
* Self-Care
* Building Healthy Relationships/Communication Skills
* Communication Styles: Passive, Aggressive, and Assertive
* Healthy Boundaries
* Making New Friends
* Detaching from Damaging Relationships
* Building Resiliency

The primary teaching tools for this class will be educational handouts, in-class exercises, role-plays, and peer discussions. Homework may be assigned in between sessions to help strengthen the skills. To get the most out of the class, it will be important to attend and complete your homework on a regular basis.

**Social Skills Training (SST)**

**Type of Group: Closed**

**Class Description:**

The key goal of Social Skills Training (SST) is to improve your confidence and communication skills for effectively expressing feelings, thoughts, and needs to others in various settings. This class is purposely kept small, with no more than 6-8 participants enrolled at one time. The primary teaching tool for this class will be role-plays, as you will have the opportunity to learn and practice new skills within the group.

You will have the opportunity to role-play these skills:

* Basic Social Skills: Listening, Making Requests, Expressing Positive Feelings
* Conversation Skills: Starting, Maintaining and Ending Conversations
* Assertiveness Skills: Making and Responding to Complaints, Asking for Help or Information
* Conflict Management Skills: Compromise and Negotiation, Making Apologies
* Vocational/Work Skills: Interviewing for a Position
* Friendship and Dating Skills: Giving and Accepting Compliments, Finding Common Interests

At-home practice will be assigned at the end of each session to help you strengthen your newly learned skills. To get the most out of the class, it will be important for you to attend sessions, actively participate, and practice your new skills on a regular basis.

**STAIR**

**Type of Group: Closed**

**Class Description:**

 Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Regulation (STAIR) was specifically designed for individuals who have had traumatic experiences. Symptoms related to these past traumatic events can include nightmares, problems with anger, mood, or sleep, and intrusive thoughts or memories. Some people try to cope with these symptoms by trying to avoid traumatic memories and feelings and others just feel overwhelmed by their memories and emotions.

People who are struggling with their traumatic memories and feelings will often turn to unhealthy ways of coping, such as drug and alcohol use, risky behavior, or unhealthy relationships. While these coping strategies are understandable and can even be effective strategies in the short-term, they ultimately do not work because the problems and feelings remain. Additionally, these coping strategies can become problems in themselves (for example, addiction or ruined relationships) in the long-term.

STAIR has been found to be effective in numerous studies, both alone as a skills-based intervention and in combination with other trauma treatments for added benefits.

**STAIR Goals:**

* Become more aware of and comfortable with all your emotions
* Learn positive, healthy coping skills for distressing feelings
* Identify unhealthy relationship patterns
* Develop skills to improve your relationships

**For more info on STAIR please contact Dr. M. Garcia, x24423**

**Stress & Coping**

**Type of Group: Rolling Admissions**

**Class Description:**

This class will define stress and help you become aware of the stress in your life, including mental and physical signs of stress, and environmental factors.

We will learn about and practice new ways to cope with stress, including:

* Positive Self-Talk and Positive Reframing
* Sleep and Relaxation Techniques
* Creative Expression
* Healthy Eating
* Physical Activity
* Social Support and Communication
* Leisure Activities and Doing Activities You Enjoy
* Time Management and Organization

Teaching tools in this class will include peer discussions, hands-on/experiential activities, handouts, and practice assignments.

**TECH**

**Type of Group: Closed**

**Class Description:**

Technology Empowerment & Confidence at Hines (TECH) is a class geared for participants to learn how to effectively use technology in their daily life. This class will go over basic skills such as connecting to Wi-Fi and taking a screenshot, to other skills such as using apps for entertainment and paying bills. Facilitators will support participants in using their device with hands-on instruction. Group members will also learn how to navigate common technical issues and where to find support for more difficult technical issues.

Through this class you will:

* Learn about smartphone settings
* Learn and set up organizational tools using technology
* Learn about maintaining your security with technology
* Learn how to download new apps for a variety of purposes
* Learn basic troubleshooting techniques and where to go for more assistance

The primarily teaching tools for this class will be educational handouts, and hands-on practice. This class will mainly focus on using mobile devices and tablets, but some of these skills will apply to other forms of technology. We hope that by the end of the class, participants will feel comfortable completing these skills on their own, or even teaching others.

**Unique Experiences**

**Type of Group: Closed**

**Class Description:**

The key goal of Unique Experiences is to help those with unique experiences (i.e., those who hear voices, see things, or have intense paranoia) learn ways to better manage stress and overcome barriers to reaching their recovery goals.

Throughout this class you will:

* Learn what causes and protects us from voices and paranoia,
* Learn and practice stress reduction and relaxation strategies,
* Have a chance to talk about how thoughts affect feelings and actions,
* Gain support from your peers who have had similar experiences to your own,
* Learn how to adjust your thinking to be more balanced, accurate, and helpful, and
* Design a wellness plan

The primary treatment tools for this class will be educational handouts, in-class exercises, and peer discussions. Homework will be assigned in between sessions to help strengthen the skills. To get the most out of the class, it will be important to attend and complete your homework on a regular basis.

**Whole Health**

**Type of Group: Closed**

**Class Description:**

This group is designed to partner with veterans and create personalized plans for optimal health and well-being.  This process will explore the specific health needs of each group member, but also assess the values and ideals of each veteran to help promote a holistic health care approach.

Areas covered in this class include:

* The circle of health
* The components of proactive health and well-being
* Taking a Personal Health Inventory
* Identifying your values
* Setting SMART goals
* Exploring barriers
* Food and drink & power of mind
* Family, Friends, and Coworkers (Community) and Surroundings
* Moving the body and recharging
* Spirit & soul and personal development
* Making a personal health plan

The goal is for each veteran to collaborate with their health care team to help gain a solid understanding of the veteran’s priorities and to align those with the health care provided, resulting in positive healthy outcomes.