On a Damp Saturday Morning at the Roseburg VA Medical Center Campus, a group of 8 Veterans met in a small conference room. A box was open in the center of the table featuring fishing line, scissors, bobbins, spools, hooks and other assorted tools. There were Ziploc bags with bits of animal hides and each attendee had their own Fly tying vise. This was therapy.

The Veterans were attending a fly tying class taught by Roseburg Veteran, Rusty Lininger. Lininger started Source One Serenity, a local nonprofit promoting healing and recovery for Veterans through fly fishing and conservation. Lininger has been offering fly tying and casting classes to Veterans in the Residential Recovery Treatment Programs for PTSD and Substance Use Disorders.

Emerging studies have shown that Fly Fishing and other forms of outdoor recreation can be beneficial for Veterans with PTSD and other mental health challenges. Veterans report that learning a new skill and spending time outdoors can be beneficial for recovery and improve self esteem. Lininger began offering Fly Fishing classes in May 2017. Veteran in the session reported that the class provides (cont.)

On October 19, the Roseburg VA held a mile long walk to promote breast cancer awareness and education. Similar walks were held in Eugene, Brookings, and North Bend. October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and is a great time to focus on wellness and cancer prevention. Approximately 50 people participated in the Roseburg Event.
“Recovery occurs via many pathways. Individuals are unique with distinct needs, strengths, preferences, goals, culture, and backgrounds that affect and determine their pathway(s) to recovery. Recovery is built on the multiple capacities, strengths, talents, coping abilities, resources, and inherent value of each individual. Recovery pathways are highly personalized. They may include professional clinical treatment; use of medications; support from families and in schools; faith-based approaches; peer support; and other approaches.”


Managing Stress During the Holidays

The holidays are a great time but they can also be stressful for Veterans in Recovery. Here are a few tips to get you through the new year.

- Get Physical. Take a walk. Regular activity is a big help.
- Relax. Discover mindfulness and relaxation skills.
- Express Yourself. Don’t keep your thoughts bottled inside. Speak up in respectful ways.
- Use positive power. Focus your attention on positive thoughts about yourself and others.
- Get help if you need it. Visit your primary Care or Mental Health provider or call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255.


Halloween Recovery Message

—by Keith Lewis, Local Recovery Coordinator

My first year as a social worker in the VA system, my clinical supervisor made an unusual suggestion. He asked, “do you dress up for Halloween?” I replied that I do and he suggested that I wear my costume to work for the Halloween party attended by Veterans in treatment. He also suggested that I encourage the Veterans to wear a costume as well. On the day of the party, I donned face paint and a devil costume (shown below). A local group donated costumes and Veterans in treatment had the opportunity to dress up and enjoy the party. A veteran talked to me afterward and told me he was able to let go of his problems for a day and be someone else. It was the first fun day he had in a long time. Recovery should be fun. We enter treatment not for the sake of treatment but to live a life well lived and achieve our potential. Life is short. Have fun and dress up every now and then. Happy Halloween!

Have Feedback? Contact Keith Lewis at the information below.

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