



Peer Specialists Are Veterans Helping Veterans Build Bridges to Wellness

The Community Recovery Connections Team creates and supports Veteran social networks in Bedford, on the North Shore, South Shore, Merrimack Valley, and surrounding areas. We are Veterans in recovery; we offer guidance and bridging developed through our own lived experience.

The current state of affairs W/COVID-19 has impacted our daily lives dramatically. Many Veterans affiliated with CRCT are trying to live/maintain recovery of some sort. In this climate we are told to socially isolate, however Instead of socially isolating lets all try to remain “socially connected” but physically distant? Please accept these pointers on staying connected while we practice social distancing. Please remember; **peers are all Veterans and we want to help all vets as much as possible during this challenging time.**

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How to access AA or NA meetings remotely

AA Boston meetings

<https://aaboston.org/>

Comprehensive list

<https://thephoenixspirit.com/2020/03/accessing-recovery-meetings-during-covid-19/>

AA Bulletin

<https://aaboston.org/wp-content/uploads/JANUARY-2021-BULLETIN.pdf>

Check out NEADS, a Service Dog organization that Helps a lot of Veterans. The picture is some of their Service Dogs in Training/ NEADS Inc. | neads.org



The Science of Happiness & Strategies for a Happy 2021!

Do you ever wonder what makes a person truly happy? Are they born that way? Do they have rituals or do things on a daily basis that help them feel happier? Is there a secret to finding more joy? Should we pursue it or will it just find us?

The science of happiness or positive psychology as it's often referred to teaches us that there are in fact things we can all do to bring more happiness into our daily lives. Simple strategies that bring us joy, less worry and ultimately more peace. You might be surprised to learn how simple some of them are. These are my personal favorites:

Ditch the list! We all love to check things off of the "to do" list. We give ourselves credit for all of our accomplishments. The problem with the to do list is that it's always too long and that ultimately means things remain on the list. We carry them over to the following day or week and in the end the list leaves us feeling as if we've somehow failed. Never being able to complete everything has a way of stirring up negative energy and a failure mentality. My suggestion is this; if you must make a list make it only 3 things each day.

Self-Care

Do something for someone you care about.

Do something that makes you happy in your career or volunteer work.

Using this strategy will leave you feeling accomplished and happier each day. If you do additional things, great. Celebrate that you were an over achiever that day! This allows you to move away from the list which is most likely way to long and completely unreasonable for one person to accomplish is a day anyway! Read that again, the list which is most likely way to long and completely unreasonable for one person to accomplish is a day anyway!

Meditate or be still. Meditation and being still are two different things but both can help you find more happiness. Allow yourself at least 10 minutes every day to just BE! Be still, be with your thoughts, be aware. Meditation can be difficult for many but with practice finding the sweet spot in meditation is a game changer!

Be patient with yourself and your busy mind. Keep trying. Meditation and being still take practice. The only goal is to make the effort. I suggest you begin by focusing on the breath. Let your mind follow the breath as it causes your chest to rise and fall. Allow yourself to breathe deeply inhaling through your nose and exhaling or releasing the breath from your mouth. This is the only thing you need to do. You can't do it wrong. If you find yourself getting anxious or stressed just acknowledge the thoughts and release them. You might say something like this to yourself, "I feel my thoughts trying to race, I acknowledge my busy mind, I honor my thoughts, I try to release my thoughts now." Let yourself off the hook if your struggling.

Stillness and meditation are great ways to disconnect from the chaos of the day. Allow yourself to recharge your batteries in this way. You will be surprised at how this can raise your happiness meter with just 2 to 10 minutes a day. I suggest giving yourself stillness or meditation timeout's throughout your day and see how it goes.

Smile! This is magic. The simple act of smiling can cheer you up and make you feel happier.

If your feeling bummed out, down or depressed try to smile. It sounds crazy but it works. Fake it until you feel it meaning when you don't feel at all like smiling just do it. It will change your vibration and lift your spirits. The mere act of smiling has been shown in studies to slow down your heart rate during stress and chills you out. Give it a try!

*the effect of smiling study was from the University of Kansas

Try these strategies and let us know how it goes. We'd love to hear!

Wishing you Happiness in 2021!

Contributed by Erin C. Mahoney, CPS



Veterans Coffee Socials
Assisting those who have served!

Coronavirus safety

- Please use caution, use your own judgment and keep in mind other comfort levels
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water, or clean them with alcohol-based hand rub.
- Maintain at least six feet distance between you and people coughing or sneezing.
- Stay home if you feel unwell.
- Practice physical distancing by avoiding unnecessary travel and staying away from large groups of people.
- when Joining these meetings use current CDC Guidelines.

WEEKLY COFFEE SOCIALS
Follow CDC Guidelines
Must wear a mask.
Bring your own Coffee/ Snack
Please follow CDC Guidelines

AUBURN: Tuesdays, 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM
Dunkin Donuts, 386 Southbridge St., Auburn

BEVERLY: Saturdays 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM
AMVETS Rocci Post 56, 143 Brimbal Ave, Beverly

BILLERICA: Fridays, 9:30 AM to 11:00 AM
High-Octane Harley, 1 Chelmsford Rd., Billerica

HAVERHILL: Thursdays 7:30 AM to 9:00 AM
Battle Grounds Coffee, 39 Washington St., Haverhill

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Battle Grounds Coffee, 39 Washington St., Haverhill

PLYMOUTH: Fridays 12 :00PM to 2:00PM
Nathan Hale Vets Ctr., 116 Long Pond Rd., Plymouth

NORTH CHELMSFORD: Tuesdays 930 to 11 the
American Legion. Vinal Post 313. 90 Groton Rd,
North Chelmsford, MA 01863.

Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

If you are experiencing anxiety or other symptoms the Veterans Crisis Line is always available. Talk, text, or chat. Call 1-800-273-8255 press 1
Send a text message to **838255**
confidential online chat session [Veterans crisis Line](#) .

We know this year is hard, Emotionally, and for some Financially. we are here for those who need emotional support for those who need Financial Support here are some resources for those who need it.

Fuel assistance
<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-home-heating-and-energy-assistance>

Food assistance
<https://www.mass.gov/snap-benefits-formerly-food-stamps>
<https://www.foodpantries.org/st/massachusetts>

MONTHLY COFFEE SOCIALS

HULL: 1st Friday, 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM
K Of C, 440 Nantasket Blvd., Hull

WEYMOUTH: Last Friday, 9:00AM to 10:30AM
McCulloch Bldg., 182 Green St., Weymouth

Bedford VA's Monthly Veterans Free Produce Market is
January 21st 1230-2 PM