

# Behavioral Health Services



## *Erie VA Medical Center*

135 East 38th Street  
Toll Free: (800) 274-8387  
Local: (814) 868-8661  
BHC Extension: 2038

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**VA**



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Veterans Health Administration  
*Erie VA Medical Center*

## Erie VAMC Behavioral Health Services

The Erie VA's Behavioral Health Clinic has a wide range of services to help Veterans meet their mental health and substance abuse recovery goals.

In addition to individual therapy, group therapy, and medication management, the Behavioral Health Clinic offers programs to assist with crisis intervention, homelessness, employment, substance abuse, and so much more.

The Behavioral Health Clinic offers traditional hours, evening, and Saturday morning appointments. Certain services are also available in the Ashtabula, Crawford, McKean, Venango, and Warren Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) either in-person or through telehealth.

If you would like to know more or would like to enroll in any of the services, please call the Behavioral Health Clinic at 814-860-2038 or 1-800-274-8387 to self-refer.

### Hours of Operation

M-F 8:00a - 8:00p  
Friday 8:00a-5:30p  
Saturday 8:00a-12:00p

### Confidentiality

Behavioral health services are confidential. We will not talk to anyone about information you share unless you give written consent. Under federal law, a few exceptions to this rule exist. If you have questions, please ask your behavioral health provider.



## Evidence-Based Therapy

The Erie VA Medical Center has staff members trained to provide evidence-based psychotherapy (EBP) to Veterans. EBPs are therapies that have been demonstrated to be effective through research studies. They are effective, goal-oriented, time-limited, and have lasting benefits.

- Social Skills Training improves skills for managing health, conflict, relationships, and work
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) explores the relationship between thoughts and emotions, and focuses on changing thoughts and behaviors in order to improve mood. CBT therapy is also offered for chronic pain and insomnia.
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy focuses on managing thoughts and feelings that overwhelm our sense of well-being by helping Veterans overcome struggles with emotional pain and commit to what matters most in their lives
- Interpersonal Therapy focuses on improving mood by supporting positive relationships and addressing relationship problems caused by life changes, grief, and other issues
- Problem Solving Therapy helps Veterans recover from difficult life situations by teaching coping skills to deal with major life circumstances and chronic daily stressors
- Integrative Behavioral Couples Therapy improves relationships by helping couples accept and tolerate each other's differences

**To access EBP services:**  
Call the Behavioral Health Clinic at 814-860-2038 to self-refer.

## Primary Care-Mental Health Integration

The Behavioral Health Lab program provides telephone-based medication monitoring and support to help patients understand their symptoms. A registered nurse will work with a psychiatrist to offer suggestions for medication and care adjustments, as needed.

Primary Care- Mental Health Integration (PC-MHI) works with your primary care team to meet your mental health needs right in Primary Care.



- PC-MHI clinicians are co-located in Primary Care and provide assessments and brief solution-focused interventions to Primary Care patients
- PC-MHI staff can help with common concerns like stress, anxiety, feeling down, irritability, and trouble sleeping
- Services are available the same day as the Veteran's Primary Care appointment

**To access PC-MHI:**  
Ask your Primary Care team today or call the Behavioral Health Clinic at 814-860-2038 to self-refer.

## Substance Abuse (SA)

- Individual therapy to assist Veterans to recognize strengths, identify motivation for change, and offer referrals to more intense programming, as needed
- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Substance Abuse Disorders (CBT-SUD) is an evidence-based therapy for Veterans wanting to reduce or abstain from substances. Treatment involves weekly sessions focused on managing cravings and urges, refusal skills, building sober supports, and managing mood
- The Intensive Outpatient Treatment Program (IOP) provides group therapy in an intensive treatment approach similar to residential substance abuse facilities on an outpatient basis
- Behavioral Couples Therapy for Substance Abuse Disorders (BCT-SUD) is an evidenced based therapy for married or cohabitating couples who are experiencing problems in their relationship because of drugs and/or alcohol
- Detox services include outpatient detox from alcohol, benzodiazepines, and opiates as well as limited inpatient detox services
- Medication management, to include Suboxone and oral Naltrexone, are offered in conjunction with individual therapy, when appropriate. Naloxone, an opioid reversal medication, is also available

**To access SA services:**  
Call the Behavioral Health Clinic at 814-860-2038 to self-refer.

## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

### Evidence Based Practices:

- Cognitive Processing Therapy teaches Veterans how to identify trauma-related thoughts and change them so they are more accurate and cause less distress
- Prolonged Exposure helps Veterans talk about their trauma over and over until the memories are no longer upsetting
- Cognitive Behavioral Conjoint Therapy for PTSD is available for Veterans struggling with PTSD symptoms who have partners willing to participate in couple's therapy

### Therapy Groups:

- PTSD Education Group (PEP): 5-week orientation group for Veterans of any war era who are new to treatment
- Combat PTSD Support & Education Group  
PTSD Education Stage II  
Tuesdays 12:00-1:30pm
- CPT Group: 12-week evidence-based group
- PTSD/Substance Abuse Group:  
Tuesdays 12-1:30pm
- Vietnam PTSD Support Group  
Wed. 1:00-2:30pm
- Male PTSD and Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Group  
Wed.: 1:00-2:30pm
- Female PTSD & MST Group  
Mondays: 1:00-2:30pm
- OEF/OIF/OND PTSD Group  
Thursdays: 6:00-7:30pm
- Crawford Peer Support Group  
1st & 3rd Thursday 10-11:30am
- Warren PTSD Group
- Family Support Group  
2nd/4th Thursday 11-12:30pm

### To access PTSD services:

Call the Behavioral Health Clinic at 814-860-2038 to self-refer.

## Homeless Care

The Homeless Care Team's goal is to end homelessness among Veterans through outreach efforts and community partnerships.

Who is eligible? Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. With the exception of the Grant & Per Diem program, Veterans must be eligible for VA services.

### Programs include:

- Grant & Per Diem Housing: A transitional housing program where Veterans focus on the development of life skills necessary to address the issues that led to homelessness
- Housing Choice Voucher/HUD-VASH: The Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Veterans Affairs Supported Housing (HUD-VASH) program assists eligible homeless Veterans and their families with case management support and permanent housing through Section 8 housing vouchers. This program is income-based & requires active participation in case management. The Veteran is responsible for paying utilities and 30% of their income toward rent
- Contract Emergency Shelter Services: Short term emergency shelter placement and case management support is available at a local shelter
- Homeless Employment: Veterans who are working with the Homeless Care Team can work with an Employment Specialist who can assist with job development

### To access the Homeless Care Team services:

Call the Behavioral Health Clinic at 814-860-2038.

## Peer Support

A Peer Support Specialist is a Veteran with a current or past mental illness experience who has gone through the recovery process and helps other Veterans diagnosed with mental illnesses. Peer Supports can share personal experiences with their diagnoses and also their military experience to help other Veterans in their recovery path.

Each Peer Support has their own story of traumas and struggles related to their military experience and can relate to Veterans because they have "been there" themselves. In addition to individual services, Peer Supports also facilitate a number of groups.



- Combat PTSD Support and Education Group  
Call for dates and times
- Vietnam PTSD Support Group  
Wednesdays 1:00-2:00
- Crawford Peer Support Group  
1st & 3rd Thursday 10-11:30am
- PTSD Education Stage II  
Tuesdays 12:00-1:30pm

### To access Peer Support services:

Call 814-860-2038.

## The PRRC

The Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC) offers education, skills training, and support in the form of groups. Some topics include strength-based recovery, anger management, stress management, substance abuse, and social skills. The PRRC is open Monday through Friday from 9:00am-noon. To help Veterans in their recovery, they are asked to commit to attending at least 3 days a week. The PRRC is available to any Veteran who is experiencing a significant mental health issue that is having a serious impact on their social, work, or educational life.



- Learn about the nature and treatment of mental illness
- Find ways to prevent relapses and re-hospitalizations
- Learn to cope successfully with symptoms
- Gain more control over their own treatment and improve the quality of their lives
- Feel more confident in the community and in pursuing their goals in life

### To access the PRRC program:

Contact the Program Manager at 814-860-2487.

## RANGE: Case Management

The Rural Access Network for Growth Enhancement (RANGE) program provides behavioral health intensive case management to Veterans with serious mental illness living in the rural counties of Crawford and Venango. The aim of RANGE is to assist Veterans with serious mental illness in their recovery journey by increasing functioning in their community.



- Accessing community resources
- Recovery support for physical and mental health
- Treatment plan development
- Transportation to appointments that would have been otherwise missed due to lack of transportation
- Crisis planning and intervention
- Social skills training
- Assessment and monitoring.
- To be eligible for RANGE services, Veterans must have one of the following diagnoses:
  - Schizophrenia
  - Schizoaffective Disorder
  - Bipolar Disorder
  - Major Depression
  - PTSD
  - Any severe or chronic mental health condition

**To access RANGE services:** Veterans should ask their mental health provider for a referral. Questions can be directed to Crawford's Case Manager (814-440-7116) or Venango's Case Manager (814-460-5501)

## Veterans Employment Services

Veterans Employment Services are available for Veterans who are actively engaged in the Behavioral Health Clinic and/or homeless services.

The Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program is a vocational rehabilitation program that aims to match work-ready Veterans with competitive job opportunities, assisting them in meeting their mental health recovery goals. To be eligible for CWT, Veterans must be active with the Behavioral Health Clinic. The two CWT programs available at the Erie VA include:

- **Transitional Work Experience (TWE):** a pre-employment program that matches Veterans with a work assignment at the VA Medical Center or in the community for a limited amount of time. The program assists Veterans by providing employment experience while they work toward obtaining competitive, community-based, permanent employment.
- **Supported Employment (SE):** a program designed to help Veterans with serious mental illness obtain and maintain meaningful work in the community.

**Homeless Employment Services:** Veterans who are working with the Homeless Care Team who are interested in employment can work with the Homeless Veterans Community Employment Specialist (HVCES) who can assist with job development.

### To contact Veterans employment services:

Ask your mental health provider for a referral or call 814-860-2038 to self-refer.

## Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)

The purpose of the VJO initiative is to avoid unnecessary criminalization of mental illness among Veterans.

The VJO Coordinator focuses on three areas:

- **Community education:** Provides information and education about Veterans' issues and the services available. This is targeted toward law enforcement and corrections agencies, courts, human service agencies, and organizations serving Veterans.
- **Finding and enrolling Veterans:** Develops communication with jails to identify Veterans who are incarcerated while advocating for and connecting the Veterans to care.
- **Liaison services:** Works with Veterans Treatment Courts, Magisterial District Courts, and Common Pleas to improve awareness of Veteran specific issues and the care the VA can offer.

The VJO Coordinator can:

- Assess Veterans' health care needs, identify appropriate VA and non-VA services
- Refer and link Veterans to comprehensive health care services
- With Veteran consent, communicate with law enforcement and corrections on treatment progress
- Function as a court team member including assessing the needs of Veterans as impacted by court
- Connect court-monitored Veterans to evidence-based treatment

### To access VJO services:

Call the Behavioral Health Clinic at 814-860-2038.

## Crisis Intervention & Suicide Prevention

Every Veteran suicide is a tragedy and the VA is committed to offering crisis intervention services 24/7 to ensure that Veterans and their family members can get help when needed. The Erie VA employs two Suicide Prevention Coordinators who offer a variety of services:



- National Veteran's Crisis Line follow up
- Crisis response and assessment of suicidal Veterans
- Connect Veterans to mental health and other health care services
- Comprehensive suicide risk assessments and safety planning
- Care management services for high risk Veterans
- Counseling on lethal means restriction
- Community outreach
- Veteran, family, community, and VA employee education

### To access crisis intervention services:

Call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-TALK (press 1) or the Behavioral Health Clinic at 814-860-2038. After normal business hours, the Behavioral Health on-call clinician can be reached by calling 1-800-274-8387.

**IF A VETERAN IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, CALL 911.**