

***Transitional Housing***

***CHRT***

Crisis & Housing Response Team



## ***Introduction***

Prevention Concepts & Solutions provides services and supports for at-risk veterans and military families. For years, our organization has worked, through various channels, in our efforts to assist veterans and their families. At first, our mission was to provide Emotional Support and Psychiatric Service Dogs to veterans and military families who, after years of suffering from service-related, psychiatric injuries in which traditional, treatment approaches, alone, were not successful in mitigating symptoms related to their mental, emotional, and/or physical health, had nowhere else to turn.

However, after working with the veteran community, and after collaborating with other veteran-focused organizations (e.g., Odin's Outcasts), we realized that, albeit beneficial, donating service dogs to veterans was only one piece of the complex puzzle of needs related to the veteran community. Working from this contextual understanding, our organization expanded our K-9 Program to include veterans—working together with trainers and peer-recovery coaches/mentors—in the rearing, raising, and training of our canines. Again, although the therapeutic benefits were immense, and we were reaching more veterans, there was still a missing piece to the puzzle: *transitional housing*. From a holistic perspective, and in reference to one's hierarchy of needs, we recognized that in order to have a greater reach and impact, we had to provide this elemental and foundational component to our programs.

## ***Problem/Need***

Veterans face unique risks due to their military service (including psychological, physical, and cognitive injuries related to combat and repeated deployments), which can lead to mental health, substance use, and trauma-related issues, as well as relationship difficulties and financial hardships (Gallegos, Streltsov, & Stecker, 2016). In order to start the healing process, the most basic of needs—physical and emotional safety—must be addressed first. Both intuitively and empirically, the most effective way to address these needs is to provide safe and secure environments in which equanimity can be realized.

## **Program Description**

The *Crisis and Housing Response Team (CHRT)* is designed to provide comprehensive and coordinated services and supports for at-risk veterans and military families. The 90-day program focuses on goal-/achievement-oriented approaches to satisfying one's motivation of needs and improving one's quality of life. These frameworks provide pragmatic, person-centered approaches to working with veterans and their families.

Upon entering the program, Veterans will participate in a multidimensional assessment process in which mutually agreed upon goals and targets of change will be identified and goal-attainment steps will be determined and codified (i.e., signed agreements). After the initial assessment, based on the veteran's unique needs, the care team will coordinate services and supports—both in-house and with partner organizations; this process will be transparent and participatory. In-house services and supports that are available to all program participants:

- ✓ *Peer-Recovery Coaches*
- ✓ *Social Workers*
- ✓ *Canine Trainer*
- ✓ *Case Manager*
- ✓ *Employment Specialist*
- ✓ *Life Coach*
- ✓ *Housing Specialist*
- ✓ *Fitness & Mindfulness Instructor*

**In addition to the dynamic and diverse services and supports offered, our program focuses on structure and accountability. Although each participant will have individualized schedules, below is an example of a typical day.**

5:30 – 6:00am	Morning meditation
6:00 – 7:00am	Breakfast and personal hygiene
7:00 – 7:30am	Daily group check-in (going over plans & responsibilities for the day)
7:30 – 8:00am	Morning chores (cleaning house)
8:00 – 10:00am	Group activity (e.g., morning walk/exercise)
10:00 – 12:00pm	Job search and/or volunteering in community
12:00 – 1:00pm	Lunch
1:00 – 2:00pm	In-House Recovery Group
2:00 – 4:00pm	Peer-support activities and/or animal-assisted activities
4:00 – 6:00pm	Dinner and free time
7:00 – 9:00pm	Suggested, outside recovery meetings
9:30 – 10:00pm	Nightly self-reflection and daily debriefing

*\*There will be a staff person on site from 6:00am – 10:00pm; the house will also be equipped with cameras for additional safety and accountability.*

## **Goals & Objectives**

### **1. Provide stability and safety for at-risk veterans and their families**

### **2. Improve qualities of life for at-risk veterans and their families**

- Provide housing for 32 veterans yearly (8 veterans every 90-days).
- Provide in-house therapists and social workers for veterans.
- Provide case-management services for in-house veterans.
- Provide in-house peer-recovery support services for veterans, with an open-door policy for additional veterans to receive these services.
- Provide daily support groups for in-house veterans, with opportunities for additional veterans to participate.
- Provide employment support (resume building, interviewing skills, job search etc.,) for in-house veterans, with opportunities for additional veterans to receive these services.
- Provide mindfulness and physical activities daily for in-house veterans, with opportunities for any/all veterans to participate.
- Provide and/or coordinate transportation for in-house veterans, as well as their family members.
- Provide (if applicable) in-house canine-assisted therapy and canine-obedience training, with weekly opportunities for family members and other veterans in the community to participate.
- Provide (if applicable) in-house equine-assisted therapy for veterans, with weekly opportunities for family members and other veterans in the community to participate.

## **Methods and Activities**

All the methods and activities below are designed to have a positive impact on eight critical domains related to quality of life:

1. Emotional well-being – contentment, self-concept, lack of stress
2. Interpersonal relations – interactions, relationships, family, supports
3. Material well-being – financial status, employment, housing
4. Personal development – education, personal competence, self-efficacy
5. Physical well-being – health and health care, activities of daily living, exercise
6. Self-determination – autonomy / personal control, personal goals, choices
7. Social inclusion – community integration and participation, roles, supports
8. Rights – legal, human (respect, dignity, equality)

### **Team-building activities offered daily**

- Game nights
- Barbeques/family-style dinners
- Sports/recreation
- Nature walks/hikes

### **Leadership-building activities**

- Volunteerism
- Peer-coaching
- Facilitating groups
- Service dog teams

### ***Substance Use Education & Supports offered daily***

- Substance Use/Abuse Education
- Mutual-support groups
- Peer-Recovery Coaches
- Peer-Support Training
- Life Coaches

### ***Other Trainings & Workshops***

- Resume Building
- Interviewing skills
- Health & Nutrition
- Meditation/Relaxation
- Grief & Loss
- Exercise/Fitness

### ***Canine-Assisted Therapy offered daily***

As a therapeutic approach, animal-assisted activities & therapies have many well-documented benefits for those struggling with substance abuse, mental health and trauma-related issues:

- Decreases stress
- Provides motivation for treatment
- Reduces anxiety and depression
- Increases focus and attention
- Improves communication and social skills
- Reduces blood pressure
- Elevates mood levels
- Reduces loneliness and isolation (Carper, Bartone, & Petty, 2016).

### ***Canine-Related Education, Training, & Activities offered weekly***

- Canine Care
- Safe Dog Handling
- Canine Communication & Behavior
- Kennel Maintenance
- Animal Welfare
- Canine Commands & Obedience
- Socialization Exercises
- Service-Related Tasks
- Obstacle Course Navigation

***\*As a result of the K-9 Program, our organization will have the ability to donate 4, Fully-Trained Psychiatric Services Dogs to Veterans - each year.***

## **Evaluation Strategy**

### ***Instrument***

#### **\*ICECAP-A. Quality of Life Scale**

### ***Data Collection Methods***

- Focus Groups
- Surveys
- Intakes and follow-ups
- Semi-Structured Interviews
- Documents and Records

### ***Service-Oriented Evaluation***

- Are the needs of veterans and military families being met (e.g., employment, housing, mental-health, substance use and trauma-informed services, etc.)?
- Did veteran homelessness rates drop (to what degree)?
- Are veterans' qualities of life improving? To what extent?

### ***Performance-Oriented Evaluation***

- Was the timeline for each stage of the program met?
- Did we effectively engage the community and recruit volunteers?
- Were we able to secure the necessary funding?
- Were teams cohesive (did they work well together)?
- Were teams compatible with participants?
- Were the veterans and military families satisfied with the services?

### ***Process-Oriented Evaluation***

- Cost-benefit analysis
- Efficiency of service analysis

## ***Roles & Responsibilities***

### **Program Manager**

#### *Responsibilities/ Duties*

- Manages all aspects of the program
- Supervises Case Managers, Trainers, Recovery Coaches and Volunteers
- Develops organizational partnerships with government and private and nonprofit entities
- Monitors the quality of services offered
- Accounts for all funds associated with the program
- Meets financial objectives by forecasting requirements; preparing an annual budget scheduling expenditure; analyzing variances; initiating corrective actions
- Oversees training and management of staff/volunteers
- Performs any other duties necessary to properly manage the program

### **Peer-Recovery Coach/Mentor Coordinator**

#### *Responsibilities/ Duties*

- Coordinates the mentoring component of the peer-recovery coach program
- Recruits and trains new mentors
- Provides regular updates to Program Manager
- Screens mentors for eligibility and suitability
- Prepares mentees as to the expectation of the mentoring relationship
- Matches mentors with mentees in a manner that brings mutual support and energy to the overall recovery and empowerment goals of participants
- Monitors progress of the mentoring relationships through regular contact and prepares necessary reports

### **Peer-Recovery Coach**

#### *Responsibilities/ Duties*

- Promote recovery by assisting peers with treatment plan tasks such as setting recovery goals, developing recovery action plans.
- Assist peers with removing barriers directly related to recovery, including making new friends, finding new uses of spare time, and improving one's social and job skills.
- Aid with issues that arise in connection with collateral problems such as having a criminal justice record or coexisting physical or mental challenges.
- Assist peers in connecting services with professional and nonprofessional services and resources available in the community that can help meet his or her individual needs on the road to recovery.
- Help peers make new friends and begin to build alternative social networks.
- Assist the "newcomer" connect to the recovery community.
- Chart all significant events observed; both negative and positive regarding peers and their family.
- Perform individual and phone coaching to current and discharged clients as needed.
- Attend all off-site trainings and workshops required by CRHT.
- Collect data, report and document information needed to fulfill State, Court, and VA requirements.

## **Director of Operations**

### *Responsibilities/Duties*

- Makes decisions for operational activities and sets strategic goals
- Plans and monitors the day-to-day running of organization to ensure smooth progress
- Supervises staff from different departments and provides constructive feedback
- Evaluates regularly the efficiency of business procedures per organizational objectives and applies improvements
- Manages procurement processes and coordinates material and resources allocation
- Manages relationships/agreements with external partners/vendors
- Evaluates overall performance by gathering, analyzing and interpreting data and metrics
- Ensures that the organization operates with legality and conformity to established regulations

## **Housing Specialist/Case Manger**

### *Responsibilities/Duties*

- Assists veterans who need help in completing and executing all necessary paperwork during the housing transitions.
- Establishes and maintains effective communication with veterans/families, team members and others as appropriate and consults with other staff regarding veterans' referrals to appropriate housing resources.
- Provides guidance and referral to appropriate agencies and services to assist veterans in obtaining funds needed for security deposit and/or first month's rent and utilities.
- Guides and educates veterans on how to search for, secure, and maintain permanent affordable housing, including tenant/landlord rights and responsibilities.
- Explains program requirements and provides information to veterans and their families.
- Conducts unit inspections as required by the State, City, and County.
- Monitors any conditions that may be hazardous to residents who are at high risk of infection.
- Assists with establishing and monitoring house rules as needed
- Manages and mediates veterans' grievances and reports landlord and participant non-compliance issues to the Case Management providers for appropriate follow-up.
- Works with program participants in coordinating their relocation or moving needs, e.g., referring veterans for volunteer assistance for moving.
- Stays abreast of new trends and innovations in the areas of housing resources.
- Performs administrative tasks required for the job including data entry, word processing, typing, filing, and answering phones.

## **Therapist/Social Worker (LMSW)**

### *Responsibilities/Duties*

- Provides counseling services to participants
- Conducts participant intakes and follow ups
- Develops Individualized, Person-Centered Service Plans
- Identifies benefits or entitlements that may be available to the participant
- Meets with the participants as required, to evaluate progress and assist participants in developing and meeting individual goals
- Provides the necessary referrals for services, including mental health and/ or substance abuse counseling
- Advocates on the participant's behalf when necessary
- Maintains data collection and case records as required by applicable rules and regulations
- Helps participants regain and maintain control over their lives and helps them transition to independent living
- Facilitates development of self-help skills, support systems, coping strategies, and increased hope and self-esteem that are central to the recovery process



## Sources

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