



The Psychosocial Benefits of Therapeutic Adventure: Complementary and Alternative Programming

Project Rebirth and the Sierra Club Military Outdoors are proposing \$1 million, three-year program development and research initiative to address a public health crisis our military Veterans face; underutilization of mental health services and high rates of attrition from mental health services. To address this need, Project Rebirth is partnering Outward Bound for Veterans (**therapeutic adventure**), the Sierra Club, Georgetown University Department of Psychology, The Veterans Administration VISN 17 Centers of Excellence, and mental health agencies across the Nation (Veterans Health Administration, Vets Centers, and local non-profit mental health agencies). The program provides a replicable **continuum of care model** integrating **veteran peer support**, therapeutic adventure, and **evidence-based therapies** to provide outstanding care to veterans.

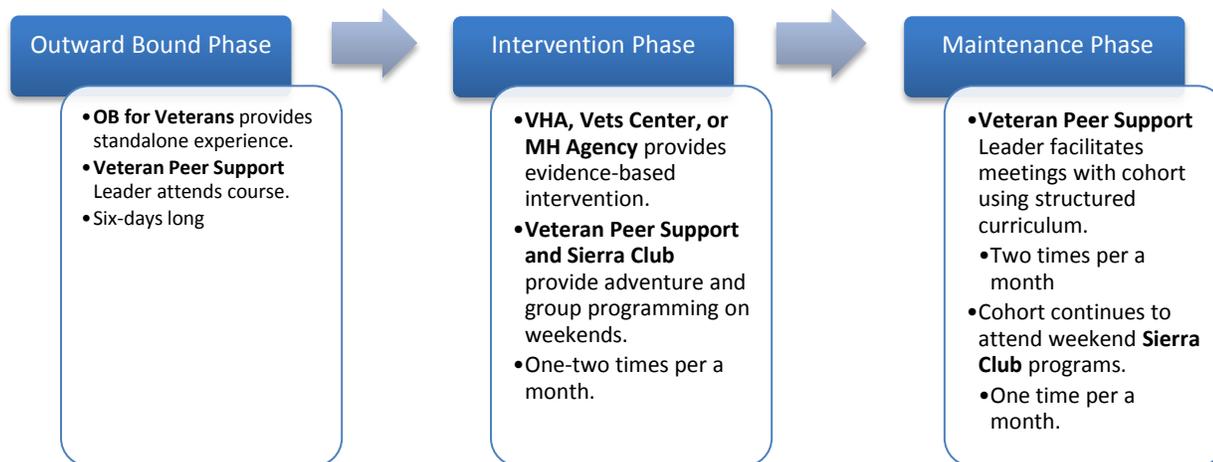
VISN 17 Centers of Excellence-Waco: Leads all research components: research design, data collection, data analysis, presentation of data, and publication of data. Longitudinal, experimental designed research will measure the following outcomes: 1) Overall mental health (symptoms of depression, anxiety, PTSD), 2) Resilience, 3) Social Connectedness/Loneliness, and 4) Rates of attrition/motivation to continue treatment.

Veterans experience numerous positive psychosocial benefits from attending Outward Bound for Veterans courses. Results from a longitudinal, experimental designed study (sample = 199 veterans) at the **University of Texas-Austin** indicate that Outward Bound for Veterans: 1) improved overall mental health (including symptoms of depression, anxiety), 2) increased resilience, 3) increased sense of social connection and reduced loneliness, and 4) increased motivation to seek mental health treatment.

OBJECTIVES

To provide veteran-centered services through a continuum of care and peer-support model that will:

- Increase Veterans’ **motivation to access mental/behavioral health treatment** through combining therapeutic adventure with a Veteran peer-support model.
- Increase quality of mental healthcare and improve mental health outcomes by providing a standardized **continuum of care** for each peer-cohort that includes **evidence-based therapies** (includes pre-intervention, intervention, and maintenance phases).
- Increase Veterans’ **completion of mental health treatment** through combining therapeutic adventure with a peer-cohort model.



Note: Partnering programs will not be asked to make large-scale changes to their programming. This model will align the organizations in a manner that links programming that already exists to better serve veterans and improve outcomes.