

# Therapeutic Sailing – Making a Measurable Impact on Community Mental Health with your Existing Resources

By

Ken Block

William Marchand, MD

# Who are we?

- Park City Sailing Association (PCSA): A non-profit community sailing club located in Park City Utah. Represented by Ken Block.
- Veterans Healthcare Administration Whole Health Flagship Site located at the VA Healthcare system in Salt Lake City, Utah. Represented by William (Bill) Marchand.

# Who are we?

- Collaborators and co-Authors:
  - Park City Sailing Association:
    - Scott VerMerris
    - Karl Paulsen
    - Hannah Halsted
    - Nicole Paradiso
  - VA Salt Lake City Healthcare System:
    - William Klinger
    - Michael Scott
    - Steve Sheppard
    - Elizabeth Shubin
    - Julie Newton
    - Tracy Herrmann
    - Brandon Yabko

# Today's Presentation

- PCSA's therapeutic sailing programs
  - Therapeutic sailing is a component of PCSA's Out Reach Program
- The development, implementation and evaluation of a therapeutic sailing program for Veterans with psychiatric and substance use disorders
  - Partnership between the Park City Sailing Association (PCSA) and the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System
- Publication: Safety and Psychological Impact of Sailing Adventure Therapy Among Veterans with Substance Use Disorders

# What is Therapeutic Sailing?

- Using exposure to sailing as a means to facilitate healing as well as enhance wellbeing and quality of life
- May or may not include sailing instruction
- May or may not include a “therapy” component, such as mindfulness
- Therapeutic sailing is a natural progression of adaptive sailing









# Potential benefits to the sport of sailing

- Making sailing more socially impactful
- Develop community partnerships (Diversity – Equity – Inclusion)
- Grow the sport of sailing





# Why How and Who

- From a sailor's perspective



# WHY

- Addiction & Mental Health Crisis in America
- COSTLY EPIDEMIC
- Recreational Therapy
- Conference Theme: Diversity - Equity - Inclusion
- Not SOS



# WHY PCSA

- A brief history of Park City Sailing Association and how we got into the therapeutic sailing business





# How

- Extension of existing adaptive program or New stand-alone program
- Single “event” or a sustainable annual program
- Utilize club’s program boats and staff or individual members boats





# How

- PC Sailing Experience
  - Utilize our community sailing fleet
  - Skippers Minimum Level 1 Small or Keel boat
  - High Level Communicators!
  - Coordination and Dock Support

















# How

- Event Overview
  - Each event has clear – pre-established goals
  - Intake Process
  - Sailing Instructions
  - Connection to therapy
  - Sailing time





NATIONAL SAILING PROGRAMS  
SYMPOSIUM 2019





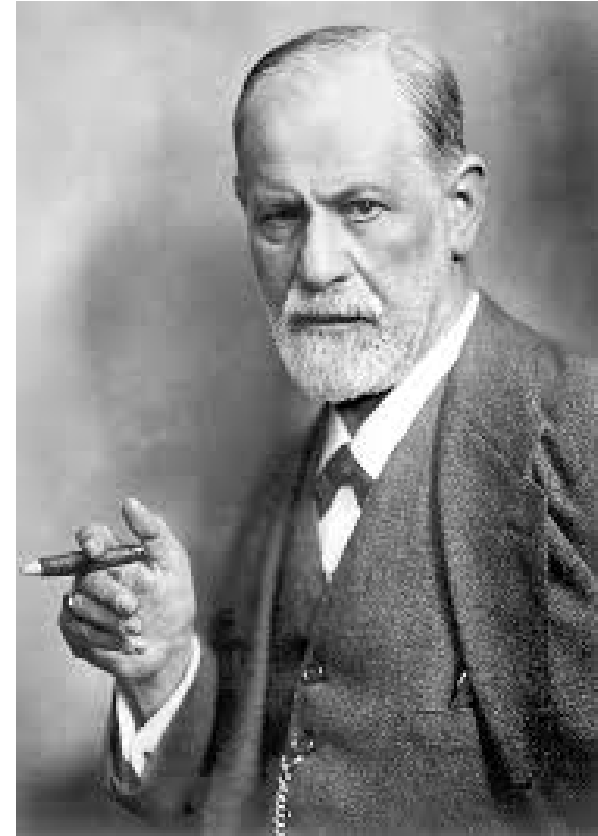
# WHO

- Local VA
- Residential / Outpatient addiction recovery programs
- National and State Recreational Therapy Associations
- Local hospitals
- Local mental health programs
- Use your imagination



# Why Who and How

- From a VA psychiatrist's (and Veteran's and sailor's) perspective





# Why

- Many Veterans suffer from psychiatric and substance use disorders
- Current treatments are often only partially effective
- Lack of treatment engagement is often a barrier
- VA is interested in developing and evaluating complementary interventions
- VA has a long history of utilizing recreation therapies

# Who

- Salt Lake City VA mental health and addictive disorders treatment programs
- Psychotherapy, recreation therapy and nursing staff

# How

- Potential therapeutic mechanisms
  - Enhanced self-efficacy from learning and mastery of new skills (if includes sailing instruction)
  - Exposure to nature (wind, water, movement)
  - Experience of pleasure
  - Comradery with other participants



# How

- Potential therapeutic benefits
  - Improved treatment engagement
  - Enhanced response to primary treatment for condition (e.g. psychotherapy)
  - Develop a more health lifestyle as a result of becoming a long-term sailor

# How

- Evaluation
  - Pre and post-sailing psychological instruments and surveys
  - Safety
  - Enjoyment of experience scale
  - Changes in long-term treatment outcomes



# How

## • Evaluation



Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS-SF)

Indicate the extent you have felt this way over the past week.		Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
PANAS 1	Interested	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 2	Distressed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 3	Excited	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 4	Upset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 5	Strong	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 6	Guilt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 7	Scared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 8	Hostile	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 9	Enthusiastic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 10	Proud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 11	Irritable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 12	Alert	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 13	Ashamed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 14	Inspired	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 15	Nervous	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 16	Determined	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 17	Attentive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 18	Jittery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 19	Active	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PANAS 20	Afraid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI: Y-6 item)

**Published:**  
 Marteau TM and Bekker H. The development of a six-item short-form of the state scale of the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*. 1992;31:301-306.

**Measure:**  
 Name ..... Date .....  
 A number of statements which people have used to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then circle the most appropriate number to the right of the statement to indicate how you feel right now, at this moment. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer which seems to describe your present feelings best.

	Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	Very much
1. I feel calm .....	1	2	3	4
2. I am tense .....	1	2	3	4
3. I feel upset .....	1	2	3	4
4. I am relaxed .....	1	2	3	4
5. I feel content .....	1	2	3	4
6. I am worried .....	1	2	3	4

**Calculation:**  
 To calculate the total STAI score (range 20 - 80):  
 • reverse scoring of the positive items (calm, relaxed, content) so 1=4, 2=3, 3=2 and 4=1;  
 • sum all six scores;  
 • multiply total score by 20/6;  
 • refer to Spielberger's manuals to interpret scores (a 'normal' score is approx. 34 - 38) or Bekker HL, Legare F, Stacey D, O'Connor A, Lemire L. Is anxiety an appropriate measure of decision aid effectiveness: a systematic review? *Patient Education and Counselling*. 2003; 50: 255-262.

# How

- PCSA – VA Programs
  - Conducted during the summers of 2017 and 2018

# How

- Two programs:
  - Sailing only
    - Veterans participate in one or more afternoon sailing experiences with some sailing instruction
  - Sailing + mindfulness training
    - Closed group of Veterans participates in 3 to 5 sessions of mindfulness training & sailing instruction





# PCSA – VA Program Preliminary Outcomes

- Sailing only program
  - 22 Veterans who participated in sailing and 22 controls in substance use disorder residential treatment program
  - Participants reported the experience to be pleasurable and calming
  - Pre- to post-sailing increase in psychological flexibility
  - Participation associated with greater likelihood of successfully completing residential treatment program

Marchand, W.R., Klinger, W., Block, K., VerMerris, S., Herrmann, T.S., Johnson, C., Shubin, E., and Sheppard, S., Safety and Psychological Impact of Sailing Adventure Therapy Among Veterans with Substance Use Disorders. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, 2018.







# PCSA – VA Program Preliminary Outcomes

- Sailing + mindfulness training program
  - Summer of 2017
    - 21 Veterans who participated in 5 session sailing and mindfulness training
    - Participants reported the experience to be pleasurable and calming
    - Pre- to post-program increase in trait mindfulness
  - Summer of 2018
    - 25 Veterans who participated in 3 session sailing and mindfulness training
    - Participants reported the experience to be pleasurable and calming
    - Pre- to post-program increase in state mindfulness and psychological flexibility







# Next Steps

- Continue research
- Disseminate to other clubs
- You can help





# Four Sailing Stories





# Questions and Contact Information

- Ken Block: [ken.block@Parkcitysailing.org](mailto:ken.block@Parkcitysailing.org)
- Bill Marchand: [William.marchand@va.gov](mailto:William.marchand@va.gov)





# Your Opinion Matters

Please open the **NSPS app**  
and complete the **session survey** found in the  
**menu bar** for a chance to win a **free drink ticket!**

*Thank you for attending this session*