

BC3's classes on confronting opioid addiction to debut in Lawrence County

April 15, 2019



Steve Treu, a licensed therapist with Quantum Revolution Counseling, conducts one of Butler County Community College's "Hope is Dope" classes on June 18, 2018. BC3 will expand its series of free "Hope is Dope" classes that promote natural endorphin-resurrecting ideas to overcome opioid addiction to Lawrence County in May and to Mercer County in June.

(New Castle, PA) Butler County Community College's series of free classes promoting natural endorphin-resurrecting ideas to confront opioid addiction, attended by nearly 140 Butler County participants in the past year, will debut in May in Lawrence County and could aid in what a Vision Ministries Pathway to Freedom Project administrator calls a widespread problem.

"The scope and breadth of addiction in New Castle and Lawrence County is extensive," said Dan Bailey, vice president of Vision Ministries. "Over the past three years, Lawrence County has lost an average of almost 60 people annually. ... The loss of life is significant."

Vision Ministries Pathway to Freedom Project operates housing for women who may otherwise be homeless and refers clients to the county drug and alcohol commission for assessment, Bailey said. It also collaborates with a Steered Straight program that has provided educational programs to more than 4,000 students, teachers and administrators in Lawrence County school districts in the past three years.

“These presentations,” Bailey said, “are very impactful and have opened conversations related to substance abuse between students, parents and teachers.”

Those conversations can continue in “Hope is Dope,” part of BC3’s “Reset Your Brain: A Revolutionary Approach to Opioid Addiction & Recovery” program that represents an objective in the college’s 2017-2022 strategic plan by focusing on quality of life.

“BC3,” said Tracy Hack, BC3’s coordinator of community leadership initiatives, “is Lawrence County’s community college. When you look at downtown New Castle, they have some of the same problems that we have in Butler. The presence of the opioid epidemic is just as strong there as it is here and that has a definite effect on the entire community and businesses.”

“Hope is Dope” classes will be held from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays from May 1 to May 22 at The Confluence, 214 E. Washington St., New Castle.

Expansion of program “only a matter of time”

Courses taught by Steve Treu are for those in recovery; relatives or friends of those struggling; support or treatment providers; educators and community members.

Treu, a Cranberry Township licensed therapist with Quantum Revolution, is the author of “Hope is Dope: Achieving Chemical Balance” and “New Eyes: A Unifying Vision of Science & Spirituality.”

“Having New Castle join forces with Butler in this initiative was only a matter of time,” Treu said. “The communities are so similar in many ways and there is strength in numbers. In this war, we need all hands on deck, and neighboring towns like New Castle and Butler will benefit by pooling resources and by speaking the same language in recovery. The only way to combat opioid addiction is through physical, mental and spiritual endorphin production. Everyone involved in this fight needs to know this.”

Seventy-five percent of his thousands of clients over 16 years have opioid addictions, said Treu, whose ideas incorporate physical, mental or spiritual skills that may trigger the brain’s reproduction of endorphins and create “a natural high.”

“The whole idea boils down to this: An opioid addict loses his natural endorphins,” Treu said. “And that is why they feel bad. That is the withdrawal. Once the endorphins disappear, the cravings become intense and that is why withdrawal is so bad. The whole goal is to produce

more endorphins. Once the client gets that, then it is just a matter of how much time they put into producing those endorphins again.”

Activities that may help to awaken the brain’s endorphin hibernation, Treu said, include exercise, yoga, meditation, relaxation, improved nutrition, music and art groups, pet ownership and spiritual development.

Goal: “Build a recovery community”

BC3’s “Hope is Dope” classes are free to those who register. Participants who complete the series of four classes are eligible for a one-year free membership to the New Castle YMCA, Hack said.

Class 1, set for May 1, is titled “It’s All In Your Head.” Class 2, on May 8, “A Unified Diversity; Class 3, on May 15, “Just Say Yes; and Class 4, on May 22, “Putting It All Together.”

“Our aspiration,” Bailey said, “is to build a recovery community through education and services and break down the stigma and build a support community as compared to one of judgment.”

Registration is required to attend the classes. Register at bc3.edu/reset. For more information, contact Hack at 724-287-8711, Ext. 8172 or tracy.hack@bc3.edu.

BC3 will use a grant from the Buhl Regional Health Foundation in Sharpsville, Mercer County, to offer “Hope is Dope” in June in Mercer County as part of a “HOPE HEAL — Healthy Endorphin-Awakened Lifestyle — initiative.