

SPECIAL RECOGNITION CATEGORY - GROUP MUSIC DIVISION

The Rebrainer Therapy Group

VA BLACK HILLS HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
FORT MEADE, SOUTH DAKOTA

On Wednesday mornings, a group of veterans comes together at the VA facility in Rapid City, South Dakota to participate in a session focusing on such areas as improving their attention, memory, problem-solving and emotional adjustment. The group calls itself *The Rebrainer Therapy Group*. All of its members have experienced a brain injury, stroke, or other neuropsychiatric illness or injury. Many have experienced physical accidents that also left visible evidence, and others have unseen scars that restrict living a normal life.

During the sessions, there is a check-in period where each group member relays how he or she is doing and personal issues are discussed. Education and training topics such as communication, dealing with depression and social skills are explored, and drumming exercises and songs reinforce the goals of the group.

Dr. James Gardiner, a neuropsychologist who works with the group says, “This group process has made improvements in the veterans’ quality of life. A bond of deep loyalty and devout dedication has grown among these men and women, as demonstrated by their regular attendance at the group and their active support for each other – both in and outside of the scheduled sessions.”

