

September 2021

Upcoming events

NH Mental Health Peer Alliance, Tue, Sept 21, 10AM. Come, let your voice be heard. The Alliance is made up of adults with lived experience who want to improve mental health services in NH, organizing to advocate, educate, and inform. Please contact greg@connectionspeer support.org for an invitation.

Board of Directors Meeting Wed, Sept 22, 5 PM. Members and staff welcome and encouraged to attend. Please contact greg@connectionspeer support.org for an invitation.

Community Meeting Fri Sept 17, 10AM
Whether offering ideas for new groups or getting updates on Step Up/Step Down, this a chance for our entire community to gather and be involved in making Connections even better. We need your voice!



Step Up/Step Down Opens Sept 9!



After a year of dreams, planning and hard work, Connections' new residential peer-support program is coming to fruition. Opening day is September 9

We are hosting two open Houses:

- Tuesday, September 7 from 1 PM to 7 PM
- Wednesday, September 8, from 7 AM to 1 PM

All are welcome to visit us, tour the home, and speak with staff. Please call 603 427 6966 if you need transportation.

CPSC SCHEDULE SEPTEMBER 2021

- **Budgeting, Job, or Computer Skills One-on-One Support: Call to set up a time...**
Meet with Christina from Cornerstone Financial for one-on-one support for budgeting, or Rachel for computer and job skills. Whether you want to get a handle on your budget, brush up your resume, or get comfortable with your computer, we've got you covered. Call us at **603 427 6966**.
- **Daily Check-in**
Mon thru Fri, 9:15 AM and 1:15 PM. Mon AM and Fri PM are online only. A chance to connect with peers, set goals, or reflect upon your day.
- **Walking Group**
Mon 9:15 AM and Fri 1:00 PM We socialize as we explore local trails. Call Darin at 603 570 8899 by 8 AM to confirm time, location, or if you need a ride.
- **Hearing Voices Group**
Mon 11 AM. Support for those who are hearing voices, seeing visions, or experiencing other unusual sensory experiences.
- **Positive Thinking**
Mon 2 PM How we see the world has real effects on our physical and psychological well-being. We identify our negative thinking patterns and explore ways to replace them with positive ones.
- **Dual Recovery (At Safe Harbor Recovery, 865 Islington St Portsmouth)**
Mon 3 PM For those struggling with substance use disorder and mental health issues, to share coping strategies and support each other.
- **Altered Book Poetry**
Tue 10 AM Creating new from old. Upcycle old book pages to create poems and original art.
- **WRAP Through Art** **Wed 10 AM** Making one of our most powerful wellness tools, our Wellness Recovery Action Plans, beautiful! Each week we will complete an art project that visualizes the week's theme.
- **Connections will be closed Mon, Sep 6 for Labor Day.**
- **The center will be closed Fri, Sep 10 for staff Co-reflection, but PM online groups will run.**
- **Community Lunch**
Wed and Thu 12 PM In the center, we enjoy a brown bag lunch from either the either Seacoast Community Lunch or Common Table.
- **A.R.T./Board Games**
Wed 2 PM. Art of Recovery Together. Come visit while working on any creative project you wish, or engage in some friendly competition on the game front. Art supplies and games are available, or bring your own!
- **Rubber-Stamped Cards**
Thu 10 AM Join Marybeth in learning techniques for creating rubber-stamped cards for yourself or to share.
- **Anxiety and Depression**
Thu 2 PM We offer a safe place to explore feelings such as sadness and fear, and learn from each other how we can respond to them.
- **Visit Gather (Food Pantry)**
Fri 9 AM We visit our local food pantry to stock up on groceries, including fresh produce
- **A.R.T./Coffee Klatch**
Fri 10 AM Just stone cold chillin' with a cup of Joe and good company. Feel free to bring a creative project. Art supplies are available.
- **Rituals and Routines (online only)**
Fri 2 PM Having a set routine can be a big hurdle to jump. Together we will make strides in looking at positive actions that will enrich our lives and look at what gets "in the way."
- **Journaling (online only)**
Fri 3 PM Reflections and inspiration. Come to journal or spin a tale. A directed prompt will be offered, but all topics are welcome.

CPSC SCHEDULE SEPTEMBER 2021

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:15-10:00	AM Check-in(remote) 9:15 Walking Group	AM Check-in Walking/ Stretching	AM Check-in Walking/ Stretching	AM Check-in Walking/ Stretching	AM Check-in Visit Gather Food Pantry
10-11:30	Hearing Voices 11:00	Altered Book Poetry	WRAP Through Art	Rubber- Stamped Cards	A.R.T/Coffee Klatch
12-1			Community Lunch	Community Lunch	PM Remote Only
1:15-1:45	PM Check-in	PM Check-in	PM Check-in	PM Check-in	PM Check-in 1:00 Walking Group
2:00-2:45	Positive Thinking	Music for Mind and Spirit 1:30- 2:30	A.R.T/Board Games	Anxiety/ Depression	Rituals and Routines
3:00-3:45-	Dual Recovery				Journaling

Sept Special Programming

Community Picnic, Fri, Sept 3, 11 AM
Kick off your Labor Day weekend! A great chance to socialize safely and enjoy our beautiful community. We gather at a local scenic spot. We provide hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, coleslaw, and drinks! Call to reserve a spot or for transportation. **And a big shout out to Donna for donating food for the August picnic. It was delicious!**

Music for Mind and Spirit Tue, Sept 14, 21, 28, 1:30 PM Thanks to an *Arts in Health* grant from the NH Council on the Arts, staff from the Sonatina Center will be here to facilitate as we create our own art, share with each other, and learn about ourselves in the process.

All services are free and no referral is needed

All Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday groups, as well as Monday PM and Friday AM groups are held at our center at 544 Islington St, Portsmouth, as well as online.

- Mon AM check-in and Fri PM groups are online only.
- The center is available for drop-ins as well.
- Call us at 603-427-6966 by 4 PM the day before to arrange transportation to the center the following morning, and by 11 AM same day to come in the afternoon.
- *Please help us keep everyone safe! Masking is required in the center if you have not been vaccinated.* All participants must wear a mask while in the van;
- Our center in Portsmouth may close for bad weather; we'll still be available online.
- To join groups online, follow this link:
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/709997085>
- If you're new to GoToMeeting, get the app here:
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/709997085>
- You can also dial in using any phone: +1 (571) 317-3122
- **Access Code:** 709-997-085

CENTER NEWS AND HAPPENINGS

Step Up/Step Down Announces Opening Day!

By Caroline Moriarty

After months of dedication and hard work, we are delighted to begin welcoming participants on September 9th!

Connections Peer Support Center is excited to announce that our new Step-Up Step-Down program will be opening this month! Step-Up Step-Down is a residential program in Northwood, New Hampshire. Our goal is to support those transitioning into or out of a mental health crisis. We provide support as our participants focus on their mental wellbeing.

Step-Up Step-Down follows the Intentional Peer Support model. All staff members are peer support specialists, and have their own lived experience with mental health challenges. The emphasis is on support, validation, and co-learning. Participants can maintain control over their wellness while staying in an environment that promotes self-determination and whole health. A typical experience at Step-Up Step-Down is 30-90 days, and there will be a maximum of 3 participants at a time. The number of participants as well as the Intentional Peer Support philosophy allows for individualized experiences that are well-suited for each participant.

Our vision is that Step-Up Step-Down can provide an alternative to psychiatric hospitalization. Too often, individuals are involuntarily

committed to hospitals because others do not feel equipped to handle a crisis because there are no good alternatives. Step-Up Step-Down is an opportunity for these individuals to maintain agency over their own life while still working on their mental health. Our participants' focus on their own experiences and the self-determined goals that will help them to recover from their crisis and return to their lives in their communities.

If you are interested in becoming a participant, please inquire further through your provider or at Connections Peer Support Center by calling 603 427 6966, or email kali@connectionspeersupport.org. We look forward to meeting everyone and hope to see you at the open house!

***Open House Tuesday, Sep 7 from 1 PM-7 PM, and
Wednesday Sep 8 from 7 AM- 1 PM
Tour the home, meet staff and ask questions
ALL ARE WELCOME!***

CENTER NEWS AND HAPPENINGS

Rubber Stamped Cards



Join Marybeth Casa for the month of September to learn techniques for creating rubber-stamped cards. Marybeth has taught numerous classes and is looking forward to sharing both her knowledge and amazing collection of rubber stamps and tools. You may join for one group or come each week. Rubber-Stamped Cards will meet on Thursdays at 10.

Connections Awarded Arts in Health Grant



New Hampshire
State Council on the Arts

Connections Peer Support Center is excited to announce that thanks to an Arts in Health grant from the NH State Council on the Arts, we are able to offer two six-week therapeutic musical residencies by the Sonatina Center of Dover, Music for Mind and Spirit, creating original music and exploring our values and stories.



Says Sonatina staff member, Emma Martin, “Everyone connects to music! I follow the individual’s lead and use music to meet their needs and wants.

Sometimes there is skepticism that we will actually work on goals, but after the first session, they will say ‘I never considered there was a deeper meaning.’

Music for Mind Spirit will meet on Tuesdays at 1:30 PM, beginning Tuesday, September 14.

Music for Mind and Spirit is supported in part by a grant from the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

OUR VOICES

To my peers:

After three-and-a-half years as Connections Peer Support Center's executive director, it is time for me to go and to make room for new leadership. I am resigning my position, but will remain until my replacement is hired.

My reasons for resigning are personal and certainly not because I am unhappy here. This is one of those big intersections we come to from time-to-time in our lives and so I am ready to make the turn onto a new street, now that the light has turned green!

I do not have words to adequately express how special my time has been with all of you, but I shall try...

I came here in March, 2018. It was a good fit for my skills and experience, but the attraction was much more than that – I wanted to be able to experience and contribute to an organization dedicated to intentional peer support as a means for growing a mutually supportive community that fosters recovery in mental health challenges for ourselves and others.

The organization has grown in a lot of ways since 2018, including programming, membership, board governance, a dedicated and amazing staff that has increased in number by 40%, and financial capacity. This has been an exciting period of growth and opportunity and we are in great shape!

There will be time to reflect on our shared accomplishments and for saying goodbye, but today I want to put a spotlight on the future of this wonderful organization, Connections Peer Support Center (CPSC)...

What might that future look like? What are the opportunities for the kind of growth that will allow CPSC to better fulfill its mission of promoting health, wellness and hope-based recovery for those who have had, currently have, or are at risk of having mental health issues?

The next executive director will work with our members, the board of directors, and the wider community to develop a strategic plan that will be the road map to guide our organization in its growth over the next three years. If you are reading this, the board and executive director will want to hear from you – what do you know about CPSC? What do you like? Where do we fall short? Your input will help our strategic planners to develop realistic goals and priorities with their eyes open – with a shared understanding of who we are right now and what we want to be as an organization that has an inclusive and mutually supportive community based in wellness and recovery.

We will keep you up to date on the board's progress in finding the right person to be our next executive director

This is the best job I have ever had and I will particularly miss the many people it has been my honor to know. I leave in the knowledge that CPSC is in the good hands of our members, our board of directors, and of staff.

Thank you, all.

Greg



OUR VOICES

Music & the Soul



Today I'm feeling a low energy level. On a scale from 1 to 10, I'm about a 6. What I know I need is rest and a rejuvenation of body, mind and spirit. Deep quietness should do the trick, but

what about music might I say, especially in relation to my soul?

Would lively up-beat music help? I think not. Why? My experience has been that listening to lively music while tired just exacerbates the feeling of fatigue in a negative way. What I do know is that gentle, soft, soothing music can and does relax me toward the needed rest and rejuvenation I need. There! Problem solved.

When I'm in the mood for up-beat music my soul is quenched at the hearing thereof. My soul soars with the eagles when accompanied by fellow up-beat music listeners engaging with me in joyous song. Singing hymns in worship services brings me to a place of soul sanctity, a feeling of togetherness and oneness with God and with my fellow earthly passengers in the direction toward the Heavens above.

Joy and happiness is the gift we receive when we are engaged in a life of meaningful service to one another and providing appropriate music offerings to and for those in need of either spirit lifting or spirit lightning ways. Thank God, for the created universal language of music and thank those who engage in such meaningful work, for life without music is a truly unfortunate reality for sure. Let there be music for all those who are in need thereof.

~ David Paul Sinclair

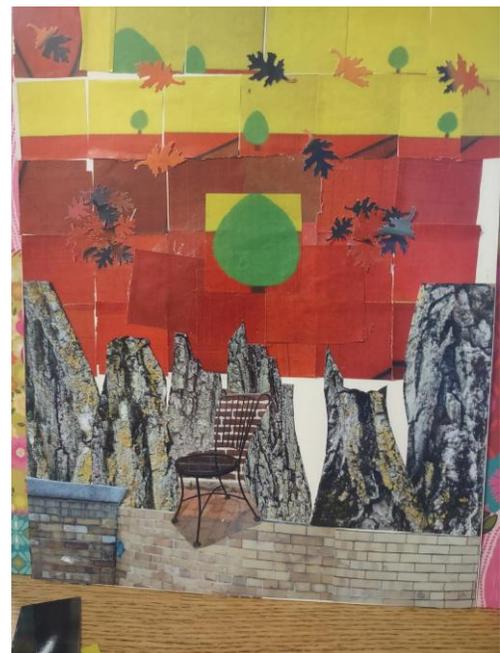
Where I've Been, Where I'm Going



The flower is very romantic and symbolizes growing in ways you love rather than having growing pains in your way. The moon is waxing, not waning, still young. Clouds mean that the sky is not perfect when it's cloudless; it needs variety. And the ground shows the heart-flower is the prima dona and the rest are the supporting characters.

~Kirsten

Betsy enjoyed exploring Collage



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Please send any additions or corrections to

info@connectionspeersupport.org

Crisis Text: Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a trained crisis counselor
www.crisistextline.org

To connect with local resources in the Seacoast area, go to www.211nh.org OR call 211.

Service Link:

Your link to information and support services within your community.

<https://www.servicelink.nh.gov/>

Toll Free Number: 1-866-634-9412

Peer Respite:

Peer Respite is a 24-hour, peer-driven, short-term, non-medical alternative to hospitalization. To begin your pre-qualifying application and interview, call the following respite centers: **PEER RESPITE PROGRAMS ARE SUSPENDED DUE TO COVID-19. PLEASE CALL OR CHECK PSA WEBSITES FOR UPDATES**

Stepping Stones, Claremont, NH. Respite 603-543-1388, Stepping Stone Peer Center: 603-543-1388,

Toll Free: 1-888-582-0920,
www.steppingstonenextstep.org

H.E.A.R.T.S. Peer Support of Greater Nashua, Nashua, NH. Crisis Respite: 603-864-8769, Peer Support Center: 603-882-8400,
www.heartspsa.org.

Monadnock Area Peer Support Agency, Keene NH 03431, Respite 603 352-5093 or 866-352-5093,
www.monadnockpsa.org

Legal Help:

NH Legal Assistance 603 431-7411
NH Pro Bono 1 800-639-5290
Legal Advice & Referral Center 1800-639-5290
Disability Rights Center: 1-800-834-1721

Meals:

Salvation Army Food Truck parked on State St near South Church, **Portsmouth:** Dinner Daily 5:00 PM, Breakfast Mon-Fri 7:00-8:00 AM, Takeout only

Middle St Baptist Church, 18 Court St, Portsmouth Community Lunch, Wednesday 12 PM-1 PM. Takeout only

St. John's Church, Chapel St Portsmouth Community Lunch: Thursday 12 PM-1 PM. Takeout only

Community Health Services:

Families First: Providing health and dental care, as well as parent and family support.

Portsmouth location: 100 Campus Drive, Suite 12, Portsmouth (603) 422-8208

Food Banks:

Operation Blessing: 600A Lafayette Rd, Portsmouth: Call for an appointment: (603) 430-8561

Gather: 210 West Rd, Suite 3, Portsmouth. Monday-Thursday 10 AM – 3 PM by appointment, Friday 9 AM-1 PM. info@gathernh.org or 603 436 9641

Mental Health/Substance Misuse Resources:

Alcoholics Anonymous, A.A. World Services, Inc., 24-Hour Hotline 1-800-593-3330; www.aa.org/

NAMI NH, www.naminh.org

National Suicide Prevention 1 800-273-TALK (8255),
www.suicidepreventionlife.org/

NH Specialized Information and Referral Center is available 24/7, 365 days a year. Simply dial 211

Granite Pathways Rehabilitation Services 10 Ferry St, Suite 319, Concord NH granitepathways.org

Safe Harbor, 603-225-9540,
<https://granitepathwaysnh.org/safe-harbor-recovery-center/>

Seacoast Mental Health Center, Inc. 603 431-6703, <http://www.smhc-nh.org/>

Seacoast Pathways, 603-812-9031,
<https://www.seacoastpathways.org>

Transportation:

ACT (Alliance for Community Transportation) 603-834-6010,
triplink@communityrides.org

COAST (Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation) (603) 743-5777 www.coastbus.org

VIRTUAL EVENTS (ALL FREE!)

Please note, that while all events are free, most do require you to pre-register; just follow the links!

Pen to Print: Beginners Creative Writing Classes

Sat, Sept 4, 5:30 – 7:30 AM

If you are just starting to write and need to build up your skills and confidence this is for you! Join Ian Ayris for guidance on your initial approach to writing and developing your ideas. Whether you want to start a new career or want to write for pleasure, kick start your ideas for your novel or prepare your work for entering competitions. https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pen-to-print-beginners-creative-writing-classes-tickets-166041208725?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch&keep_tld=1

Gentle Yoga for Terrible Times

Saturdays 9 PM

Human beings are not meant to be in constant fight, flight, or freeze mode. Chronic stress takes a devastating toll on our mental and physical well-being. If you are exhausted, stressed out, burnt out, or just looking to relax and nourish your mind, body, and spirit, please join me for 75 minutes of gentle yoga. My mission is to make yoga accessible and inclusive for **everyone**, regardless of race/ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, income level, body size, or disability status. The primary goal of the class is to help you find a small bit of a peace and relaxation during scary and stressful times.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gentle-yoga-for-terrible-times-tickets-107646048228?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

Virtual Writing Hour with the National Portrait Gallery

Tuesdays 5 PM

Join us for a virtual, creative writing hour at the National Portrait Gallery! We've set up a virtual space where writers can create, connect, and draw inspiration from the Portrait Gallery's collection. Bring your own happy-hour beverage of choice and write with us. We will provide writing prompts, and you are also welcome to bring your own writing project-in-progress. We will write for about 30 minutes and end each session with a brief discussion or reading.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/virtual-writing-hour-with-the-national-portrait-gallery-tickets-99411309904?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

Santa Barbara City College presents: Movies for Mental Health

Wed, Sept 15, 7:30-9:30 PM

Movies for Mental Health (Online) is a 2-hour virtual workshop that uses the power of film to unite folks in community, connection, and conversation. It will feature an anonymous, chat-based discussion on mental health, the stigma that frequently surrounds mental illness, and media portrayals of mental health issues. Following this will be a live screening of three award-winning short films, therapeutic activities to consciously connect minds and bodies, and a collective exploration around what the work means for us as individuals.

The event will culminate in a panel of lived-experience speakers and mental health resources, empowering us to share our own stories and access support available to us in these uncertain times.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/santa-barbara-city-college-presents-movies-for-mental-healthonline-tickets-158750211155?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

INSPIRATION

A Mix Tape for Your Life

We are thinking about music and emotion and memory this month. Think about your favorite songs and why you love them, then create a mix tape of your life.

Best song to wake up to:

Why?

Best cruising-in-the-car song?

Why?

Best song to vent when you are angry?

Why?

Saddest song?

Why?

Best song to dance to?

Why?



Song that represents you best?

Why?

Song that represents a cherished memory:

Why?

Best song to fall asleep to:

Why?

THE MONTHLY PUZZLE

This month it's all about the music!

Z K C A R T D N U O S B T C L
H P L P Q X R S M C D E E T T
U Z N S L A C O V A M O T A U
E R O T N I E U F P K O O W T
M L X K N S R N O X J D V S V
O E V Q O K K D J Q Z V U V Q
O G L P Q R W S M S E W W Z B
X G M O A J N F S Y I I U N O
H O P R D Y P F F R S Y P O R
C N E U B Y N R H Y T H M W Z
T A C U P Q K O N E T O N U W
L V I J G S X X M A V D M U O
G I O O V O F B Q R L I F W O
A O V H W N X C I B A C W Z P
A Q I U N G W U J Q J H J O C

melody

voice

tempo

harmony

sound

soundtrack

beat

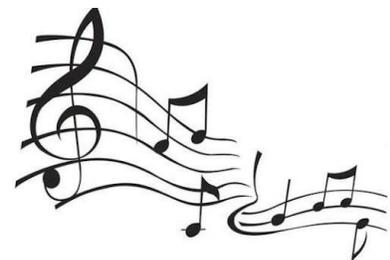
solo

rhythm

song

compose

note





If you are struggling with mental health issues, you may benefit from being with others who have similar experiences. Intentional Peer Support is about making and sustaining **mutually supportive relationships**. When people are mutual partners in a relationship, there is equality; one person is not the “helper” to the other, both benefit and can support each other working toward what we want in life. It

is a positive, hope-based approach, helping us to determine actions we can take to reach our goals.

CPSC is open to everyone 18 and older seeking support in pursuing mental health wellness with an emphasis on hope and recovery.

All services are free and no referral is required.

**Warmline telephone support, staffed by trained peers, available 5-10 PM seven days a week.
Please call us at: 603-427-6966**

Connections Peer Support Center

544 Islington St.

Portsmouth, NH 03801