

July 2021

Upcoming events

NH Mental Health Peer Alliance, Tue, Jul 20, 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.

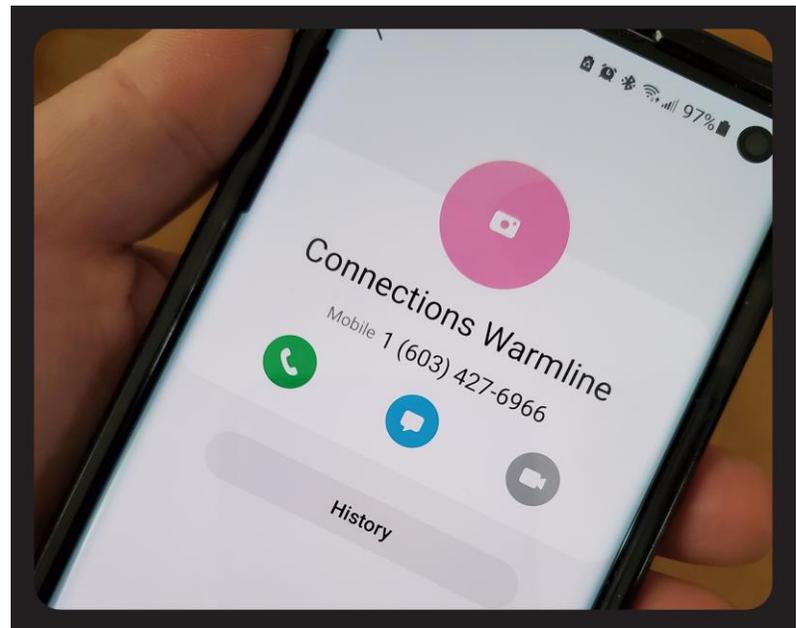
Board of Directors Meeting Wed, Jul 28, 4PM. Members and staff welcome and encouraged to attend. Please contact greg@connectionspeer support.org for an invitation.

Community Meeting Wed July 14, 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!



Warmline:

When You Just Want to Talk to Someone



Seven days a week, holidays included, from 5-10 PM, Connections' Warmline operators are here to listen. We're here for your good days, bad days, or just when you want to check in. Like all staff of peer support centers, each of us has our own lived experience with mental illness. Each also has Warmline training as well Intentional Peer Support Core training. More than ever, during the pandemic we have been able to maintain connection and be there for our community. This month, you can get to know the operators and match some faces to the voices you have spoken to (or may speak to in the future.)

CPSC SCHEDULE JULY 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**.

The physical center will be closed Mon, July 5, but virtual groups will run

- **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 and Fri 1 PM We socialize as we explore local trails. Call us at 603 427 6966 before 10 AM to confirm time, location, or if you need a ride.

- **Hearing Voices Group (phone/online only)**

Mon 11 AM. Support for those who are hearing voices, seeing visions, or experiencing other unusual sensory experiences.

- **Effective Communication**

Mon 2 PM Skills for self-advocacy. Assertive, not aggressive. Be your own best case manager.

- **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.

- **WRAP Topics**

Wed 10 AM With Wellness Recovery Action Plan, you explore and create a plan for yourself to stay well, respond to stressors, or even to a crisis. It is a powerful evidence-based wellness tool.

- **Craft Group**

Tue 11 AM A time for creative expression or observing the seasons; you never know what might be in store, always a surprise.

IPS Topics

Tue 2 PM. Intentional Peer Support is the model we practice here at Connections of building mutually supportive relationships. This group gives us a chance to learn and deepen our practice.

- **Positive Thinking**

Wed 10 AM 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.

- **WRAP Through Art**

Wed 11 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.

- **Coffee Klatch**

Wed 2 PM Just stone cold chillin' with a cup of Joe and good company.

- **Coming out of COVID**

Thu 10 AM We explore what coming out of COVID means for us as individual and as a community.

- **Anxiety and Depression**

Thu 11 AM We offer a safe place to explore feelings such as sadness and fear, and learn from each other how we can respond to them.

- **Managing Stress**

Thu 2 PM. How do we cope with stress in our daily lives? We develop healthier ways to respond.

- **A.R.T.**

Fri 11 AM. Art of Recovery Together. Come visit while working on any creative project you wish.

- **Healthy Relationships (online only)**

Fri 2 PM. Here we explore ways of changing past patterns of behavior and of developing healthy relationships in our lives.

- **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 JULY 2021

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	AM Remote Only				
9:15-10:00	AM Check-in	AM Check-in Walking/ Stretching	AM Check-in Walking/ Stretching	AM Check-in Walking/ Stretching	AM Check-in
10-10:45		WRAP Topics	Positive Thinking	Coming out of COVID	A.R.T.
11-11:45	Hearing Voices	Craft Group	WRAP Through Art	Anxiety/ Depression	
12-1					PM Remote Only
1:15-1:45	PM Check-in 1:00 Walking Group	PM Check-in	PM Check-in	PM Check-in	PM Check-in 1:00 Walking Group
2:00-2:45	Effective Communication	IPS Topics	Coffee Klatch	Managing Stress	Healthy Relationships
3:00-3:45-	Dual Recovery				Journaling

July Special Programming

- **Tue, Jul 6, 9:45 AM- 12 PM Art with Barbara** Join local artist, Barbara Levy for a painting and printing workshop. We will be learning how to use fine point drawing as a basis for our painting.
- **Community Picnic, Wed, July 21, 11 AM (Weather permitting/location TBA):** A great chance to socialize safely and enjoy our beautiful community. We provide hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, coleslaw, and drinks! Call to reserve a spot or for transportation.

All services are free and no referral is needed

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday groups are held at our center at 544 Islington St, Portsmouth, as well as online.

- Mon AM and Fri PM groups are online only.
- The center is available for drop-ins, but due to social distancing, we suggest you call ahead to make sure there is room.
- 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.
- All participants must wear a mask while in the center or 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

VOICES FROM THE WARMLINE



Bradley

After experiencing mania, depression, self-medication, addiction, denial, heartbreak, the loss of my friends, my freedom and my sanity, I started this job at Connections. I know how it feels to feel very small and profoundly

lonely. I know how it feels to hate myself, and be ashamed. I also know how it feels to love myself and feel loved, even if at times only from a higher power. Living with bipolar 1 has brought me through a very clear struggle with good and evil, and the hardest part of life for me after experiencing my first bout of mania four years ago has been sitting still, comfortable somewhere in the middle, where society seems to operate effortlessly.

Operating the warmline has been a form of therapy for me. It's been an opportunity for me to reframe the experiences I've had in my life as tools for connection, rather than isolation and stigmatization. Although similar experiences aren't necessary, having a healthy spread of fairly alternative and questionable life choices/experiences does give me a fighting chance of imagining what a random caller is going through. No matter the similarities, it makes me feel less strange, and my world feel less lonely to have people come forward from all walks of life with all their different problems, and see a connection be built by simply sitting with them in the emotions that most all of us share, despite our unique lives. At the end of June I am moving on to the Step up/Step Down program, but it's been a pleasure working on the warmline, I want to say thank you to all the callers who shared their lives with me, and let me share mine with them as well. You helped me grow through a very tough and vulnerable time in my life, and I'm so very grateful for you.



Nicole (Sat., Sun.)

I have been working on the Connections Peer Support Center warm line for over a year at this point. I have also needed and utilized the support that they offer. I

recently had a very tough loss of a close loved one and the operators call me almost every night. This support which is offered has been a huge help while I start to heal. I appreciate all the kind words and even if there are no words, the mere fact that I was called means so very much.

I try to return the support to the membership and the community. Some calls last longer than others and some people call often, while others just once in a while. Since the Covid pandemic hit I have also really looked forward to my shifts as the loneliness of living by myself has not been easy. I personally have gained so much from the interactions with the callers and have been able to work on my listening skills as well as furthering my understanding of intentional peer support. I hope that the support that I have received can be returned and that I will continue to grow and give to the community.

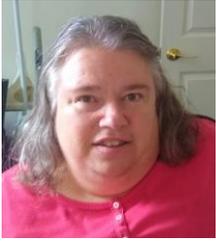


Beth (Tue, Fri, Sat)

My name is Beth. I am a Warmline operator. I like this position in that I can share my feelings as part of the give and take of the conversation.

Warmline gives me the opportunity to talk and I am not much of a talker. I find it's more likely that I will listen to the caller as best I can.

VOICES FROM THE WARMLINE



Maureen

I could not remember that last fact of the article I'd turned in. "You don't know, there'll be a hole in the newspaper," my editor yelled before slamming the phone down.

Two days later, I got the call that I was let go from my job as a Hampton Union correspondent. I was quite devastated, as I had worked so hard to earn my journalism degree, using it to support us as a single mother for many years. I had no idea what I would do for work, other than being a writer. I was lost.

Shortly after, I ran into a friend who told me to stop by the former Seacoast Consumer Alliance. I could volunteer there before a paying job.

I was very nervous the first day I visited what is now Connections Peer Support Center. I remember a dark-haired man named David Lord helped me up the wheelchair ramp into the building. Once inside, I was promptly offered a cup of coffee.

Everyone seemed so friendly. I thought I'd found a new home.

Initially, I volunteered as a writer, interviewing the members while getting to know them. Before that, my whole life entailed of my daughter's and work. But now I was developing a social life. Also, I had struggled with depression and anxiety all my adult life, but only talked about it to professionals. Now, I had peers to share with, and they confided in me.

The funding for my writing job quickly ran dry, but there was another job for me. I could work on the Warmline; After a few months as well as 2 days training, I answered my first call on the line.

It was a young lady, 10 years younger than I was, who'd just been diagnosed with breast cancer. "Oh, you must be devastated!" I blurted out nervously.

"No, I just take it one day at a time," she replied. That was my first lesson learned.

Over my years on the warm line, I learned not to make assumptions about either myself or my callers. During my 10 plus years there, I received all types of calls. Some callers were lonely, just wanting someone to talk to. Others would pretend to be lonely, before spewing out inappropriate remarks. Some callers were having trouble with their medications, in which case I could only guide to call their doctors. The toughest calls for me were suicidal, which triggers memories of losing my beloved brother that way. Angry callers also pushed my buttons.

My favorite calls were those I could relate to. We were going through similar situations, offering support, as well as mutuality to each other. It was very fulfilling when a caller said he or she felt better after speaking to me. I enjoyed working on the warm line and hope to have a similar experience of some kind.



Cindy (Mon, Wed)

The Warmline has been a wonderful and rewarding job for me. I enjoy talking to and helping others. I have learned so much with training these past few years. And the calls I make and receive. I have made many new friends. I've come a long way in working on the warmline at Connections and I truly appreciate all the staff has done to help

Next month, you will meet our Amanda, our newest, Warmline operator.

CENTER NEWS AND HAPPENINGS

Step Up/Step Down has a Home!

With the purchase of a lovely 18th century homestead completed and renovations underway, SUSD is moving forward with plans to open in July.

Our next events are a volunteer work day on Saturday, June 26 to clean and spruce up the grounds, and an open house so we can introduce the community to this exciting new venture. We are so excited to be able create a program that can positively impact people's lives and can't wait to share it with you.

We will be updating you on our progress, so stay tuned.



Carol took a break to sketch SUSD's new home



Crafting for Connection(s)

What's your special talent? Whether you paint a dazzling sunset or crochet a shawl to die for, this is a chance share your skills for a great cause.

Connections is planning a craft fair and we would love for you to add your creations. Please email nina@connectionspeersupport.org for more information.



Therapy Dogs Returning!

One of the losses of the pandemic has been the absence of Donna and her wonderful pups. That is about to change; Donna, Jada, and friends will return Tuesdays, July 6 and 13th at 12:30, dispensing love and soulful eyes as they visit. Welcome back!

Summer's Here and Picnics are Happening

After New England weather twice put the kibosh on Connections' cook-out plans, we made up for it on May 26 and June 23! We've had two beautiful days to scarf up burgers by the water, appreciating the beautiful landscape in the place we call home, as well as the delight of being together again. These were the first in-person community events we've held this year, and we are not ready to take them for granted. Everyone pitches in, and before you know it, memories are created and bonds are strengthened. And we are together.

Our next outing will be July 23; Give us a call at 603-427-6966 if you would like join in. We promise to save you a burger!

MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

What My Garden Means to Me



Every summer I plant a garden. When my dad passed away, I dedicated my garden to him. Dad always had a vegetable garden and planted flowers in the front yard. I know my dad is looking down at my garden with a smile on his face. There's a beautiful rosebush in the back of the garden, which is called June roses. I'm off I look at my garden every day and think of how much my dear dad loved gardens, too.

The sight of my garden and flowers is just so bright and beautiful I can't help but smile thinking of my dad; he meant the world to me as well I did to him. The garden is my connection to my dad. Every summer I work hard to keep the garden growing. Happy Father's Day, Dad. I love you.

~Cindy

A FATHER'S DAY POEM

He came up from the cellar
From the cellar he came
They didn't call him Sir
They just called him Dad

~Betsy



Noah got to dust off his grill-master skills



And Bradley made a new friend

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!

How To Ace a Job Interview

Sat, Jul 10, 2021, 11AM

This webinar will teach you how to master the interview process and develop a mind-set that is unwilling to relent. Ideal for those who are looking to step out into the professional world. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/how-to-ace-a-job-interview-tickets-156959477021?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

Free Pilates from Happy Mat

Tuesdays, 2 PM

The class is running on weekly basis (except holidays). It's like a 'normal class, but without leaving the house! Whether you've done Pilates before or this is your 1st time, we welcome participants of all ages, levels and ability. https://www.eventbrite.com/e/free-pilates-happy-mat-online-tickets-122309754769?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch&keep_tld=1

EFT Tapping for Confidence

Wed, Jul 21, 2021 12:00 PM EDT

In this group session, We'll tap on issues that challenge our confidence so that we can walk tall and enjoy accomplishing what we set out to do and/or unapologetically be ourselves. If this is the first time you've participated in a tapping event with Karen, please watch the 3-minute pre-session video below so we can jump right in.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/eft-tapping-confidence-online-tickets-133414828343?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

Tai Chi: 6-Week Friends Life Care VigR® Virtual Series

Tue, July 13 11 AM

The series will be held over Tuesdays, July 13-August 17. It is free of charge. We will be practicing Yang family style Tai Chi which is associated with longevity. The movements are slow, gentle, and attractive; reminding one of running water.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tai-chi-6-week-friends-life-care-vigr-virtual-series-registration-153341844585?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

Art 101: Curvy and Colorful Houses Painting

Tue, July 13, 2021 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM EDT

A virtual adaptation of our popular Art 101 workshop series for adults. With acrylic paint create a harmonious scene full of curvy and colorful houses along a road. Follow along with the instructor step-by-step; no experience necessary to participate. Materials list and Zoom session login details will be provided via email upon registration.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/art-101-curvy-and-colorful-houses-painting-tickets-149704711823?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

INSPIRATION

Wellness isn't just one thing. Take a look at this graphic and think about the places where you are where you want to be, and the parts of your life that could use some support.

Remember, if you want to talk about it, Warmline, is here every evening from 5-10 PM!

8 DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS
How Well Are You?

Emotional
Coping effectively with life and creating satisfying relationships.

Social
Developing a sense of connection, belonging, and a well-developed support system.

Occupational
Personal satisfaction and enrichment derived from one's work.

Financial
Satisfaction with current and future financial situations.

Emotional
Expanding our sense of purpose and meaning in life.

Spiritual
Recognizing creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and skills.

Physical
Recognizing the need for physical activity, diet, sleep and nutrition.

Environmental
Good health by occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support well-being.

Rate Your Wellness:

<input type="checkbox"/> Emotional	<input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual
<input type="checkbox"/> Social	<input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual
<input type="checkbox"/> Occupational	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental

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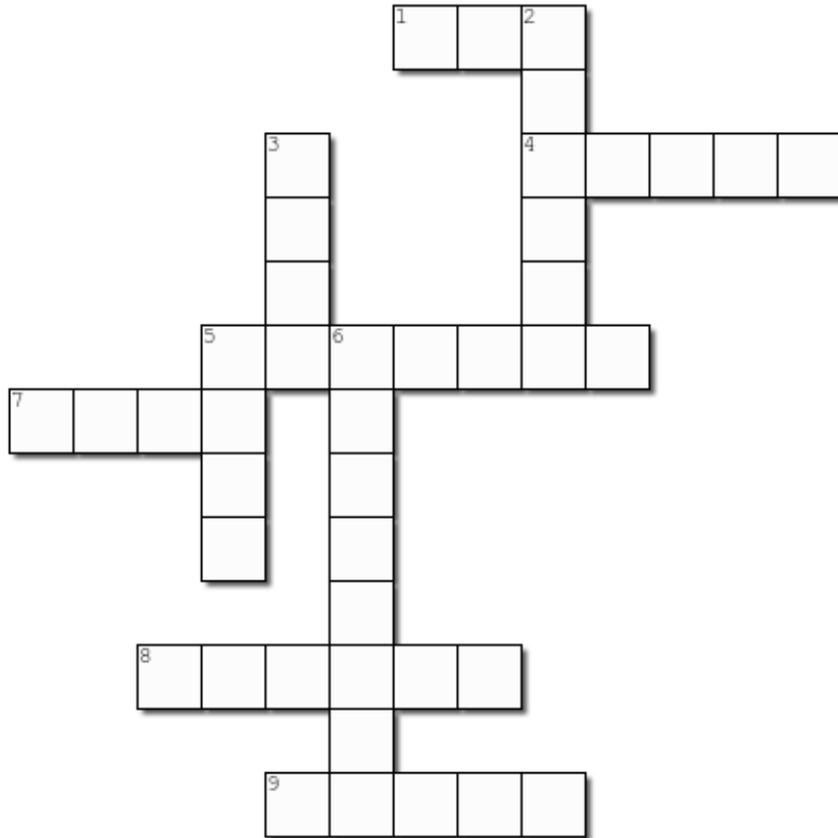
Percentages of Wellness:

<input type="checkbox"/> 1/8 = 12%	<input type="checkbox"/> 5/8 = 62%
<input type="checkbox"/> 2/8 = 25%	<input type="checkbox"/> 6/8 = 75%
<input type="checkbox"/> 3/8 = 37%	<input type="checkbox"/> 7/8 = 87%
<input type="checkbox"/> 4/8 = 50%	<input type="checkbox"/> 8/8 = 100%

THE MONTHLY PUZZLE

All about the Warmline!

All of the answers are in this newsletter



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

Across

1. Warmline is open from five to ___ PM!
4. _____ is on the Warmline Monday and Wednesday.
5. Which operator is leaving the Warmline by the end of June?
7. All Warmline operators go through Warmline and IPS _____ training.
8. Who is our newest Warmline operator?
9. Warmline is here _____ days a week!

Down

2. If you call the Warmline on Sunday night, who are you likely to talk to?
3. We practice Intentional _____ Support.
5. Who is on the Warmline on Friday?
6. When the Warmline started, Connections was called the Seacoast Consumer _____.



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