

March 2021

## Upcoming events

**NH Mental Health Peer Alliance, Tue., Mar 16, 10 AM.** 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@connectionspeersupport.org](mailto:greg@connectionspeersupport.org) for an invitation.

**Board of Directors Meeting Wed, Mar 24, 4 PM** Members and staff welcome and encouraged to attend. Please contact [greg@connectionspeersupport.org](mailto:greg@connectionspeersupport.org) for an invitation.

**Art For Insight's Janet Laird Wed Mar 17, 10 AM.** The latest of our series incorporating art into our WRAP ; this month we will be reimagining our daily maintenance plans.

### Step Up/Step Down: What's It All About?

**Thur, Mar 4, 10 AM**

Join Executive Director, Greg Burdwood and Program Manager, Kali Moulton to learn about SU/ST down and what it has to offer as an alternative to hospitalization.



We  Connection!



Whether gathered around the table crafting valentines, or reflecting upon IPS Core training and the nature of Connection as the first task of Intentional Peer Support, we realize how important those moments, when someone listens, hears us, “gets” us, are to our well-being.

# CPSC SCHEDULE MARCH 2021

Connections will be closed  
Friday, March 5 for staff co-  
reflection.

- **Daily Check-in**  
**Mon thru Fri, 9:15 AM and 1:15 PM. Mon and Fri are online only.** A chance to connect with peers, set goals, or reflect upon your day.
- **Walking Group**  
**Mon and Fri 1:00 PM** At 1 PM on Mondays and Fridays, we explore local trails. Call 603 570 8899 before noon to confirm, or if you need a ride.
- **Hearing Voices Group (online only)**  
**Mon 11 AM.** Support for those who are hearing voices, seeing visions, or experiencing other unusual sensory experiences.
- **Journaling Group (online only)**  
**Mon 2 PM.** Reflections and inspiration. Come to journal or spin a tale. A directed prompt will be offered, but all topics are welcome.
- **Dual Recovery (online only)**  
**Mon 3 PM.** For those struggling with substance use disorder and mental health issues, to share coping strategies and support each other.
- **Positive Thinking**  
**Wed 10 AM** How we see the world can have real effects on our physical and psychological well-being. We will identify our own negative thinking patterns and explore ways to replace them with positive ones.
- **Art Journaling**  
**Tue 10 AM** Please join us as we explore different types of art Journaling and writing. No prior experience needed! Feedback is welcome.
- **Crocheting and Knitting**  
**Tue 11 AM** All levels, from beginner to advanced. You may bring your own project, but we have supplies available.
- **Intro to Cartooning**  
**Tue 2 PM** Join Kali and have a blast learning the basics of creating a character, giving it life and telling a story through pictures.
- **WRAP Through Art**  
**Wed 11 AM.** Wellness Recovery Action Plan, is a process where you explore and create a plan for yourself to get and stay well. It is a powerful evidence-based wellness tool. But they can be beautiful too! Each week we will complete an art project that visualizes the week's theme.
- **Computer Skills and Job Skills**  
**Wed 2-4 PM** Topics based on member interests. Whether you want to brush up your resume, practice for an interview, surf the web, or upgrade your Word skills, we're here to support your success.
- **IPS Topics**  
**Thur 10 AM.** Intentional Peer Support is the model we practice here at Connections. This group gives us a chance to learn and deepen our practice.
- **Men's Group**  
**Thur 11 AM.** We decide the topics ourselves. Being in these smaller peer groups can allow us to share things we might find hard to share in mixed groups.
- **Depression and Anxiety Group**  
**Thur 2 PM.** We offer a safe place to explore difficult feelings such as sadness and fear, and learn from each other how we can respond to them.
- **A.R.T. (online only)**  
**Fri 11 AM.** Art of Recovery Together. Come visit while working on whatever creative project you wish.
- **Grief and Loss (online only)**  
**Fri 2 PM.** A safe place to process feelings of grief and loss, as well as learn ways to move forward.

# CPSC SCHEDULE MARCH 2021

	Monday Remote Only	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday Remote Only
9:15-10:00	AM Check-in	AM Check-in Chair Yoga/ Stretching	AM Check-in Chair Yoga/ Stretching	AM Check-in Chair Yoga/ Stretching	AM Check-in
10-10:45		Art Journaling	Positive Thinking	IPS Topics	A.R.T.
11-11:45	Hearing Voices	Crochet & Knitting	WRAP Through Art	Men's Group	
12-1	Lunch Break				
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	Journal Group	Intro to Cartooning	Computer and	Anxiety/ Depression	Grief and Loss
3:00-3:45-	Dual Recovery	Job Skills			

## March Events

- **Fri, Mar 5, Connections is closed for staff co-reflection**
- **Thur, Mar 4, 10 AM, All about Connections' new Step Up/Step Down program, a voluntary peer-based alternative to hospitalization.**
- **Wed, Mar 17 10 AM, WRAP thru Art with Janet Laird.**
- **Budgeting with Christina- call or email [nina@connectionspeersupport.org](mailto:nina@connectionspeersupport.org) to set up a time for this one-on-one support by phone or online.**

- Tue, Wed, and Thur groups are held at our center at 544 Islington St, Portsmouth, as well as online.
- Mon and Fri 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.
- Connections building 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

# OUR VOICES

## A Tree in the Park

by Bradley Friedman

A man is sitting in a room,  
feeling quite alone,  
He looks past the bottles beside his bed and sees the telephone,  
He thinks of all the things he's done, and all the hurt he's caused,  
He wants to let it out somehow, but before he can he's paused.  
The images and words come rushing in filling up his mind now,  
Where are you what's your name and do you have a plan,  
Grippy socks, smocks, spinning clocks, the cold embrace of Uncle Sam,  
His hands hover above the buttons and he's breaking out in sweat,  
What's the point in doing this again, this sad fate of mine I've met?  
Outside it's sunny and the leaves are falling, but the thoughts in his mind are dark,  
He puts on his pants, and decides to go for one of his walks in the park,  
The sun hits his face and it feels so strange, he hasn't done this in a while,  
He sits at a bench and he looks at the trees that he'd climb with his friends as a child,  
Hey man is that you? A voice startles him as he sees a man appear.  
The voice is familiar but his face is not yet clear.  
I thought it was you, the stranger says, I recognized the hair, I came out here to read my books  
behind that tree over there.  
Then it hit him, holy cow I didn't expect to see you!  
I haven't seen you since we were locked up when I was 22.  
That's right it's me, so tell me, how is life? And before you ask, I haven't got a job and I still  
haven't found a wife.  
Well, honestly man I'm in the same boat, I've been feeling really alone. It took all my energy  
today to put on some pants just to leave my home.  
The man with the book sits down on the bench before replying, I know what you mean,  
sometimes, I feel like dying.  
Wow, well I don't know where to begin, the voice inside my head has been telling me to sin.  
Tell me what you mean by voice, because I know it would be lazy, for me to go ahead and assume  
you're going crazy...  
I'm saying it's my conscience, but I have a wild imagination. People have judged me for my words  
before without any hesitation.  
Isn't that how we wound up together way back in the day?  
Yeah, it was and ever since I've really had to pay  
How so?

## OUR VOICES

I don't know, just ever since, things haven't seemed the same, I've felt so scared to try and go get things off of my brain.

Well first of all when I was young and stressed, I liked to talk to trees, you saw how the medicine that they gave me brought me to my knees.

Sometimes it's easier to talk to trees than it is to talk to people,  
Yeah, just someone there to sit with you who won't call you sick or evil.

You know that there are people like me who will listen to your pain, who will sit with you underneath the clouds and wonder about the rain.

If you feel like you're stumbling, remember before you fall,

There's trees out there who will listen to you, should you ever call

Tears streak down his face as they embrace, looking at the ground, thank you friend to no end for some courage I have found

It's been so nice seeing you, I guess I should be getting home, he looks back up, and it's just trees, he's sitting there alone.

Hello my name is not important but the voices in my head,

For quite a while now, have told me I'd be better dead,

I don't know what to do,

It's okay my friend I know what you mean, I've heard the voices too.

~ "A peer is like a tree, someone to sit with in the rain." ~



*Bradley is a Connections Warmline operator. Recently he completed Intentional Peer Support Core Training. This poem includes his reflections on his own personal experiences as well as a meditation on the power of listening and being truly heard.*

*Connections Warmline is available from 5-10 PM 7 days a week, including holidays. Call us at 603 427 6966*

*"When you just want to talk to someone."*

# CENTER NEWS AND HAPPENINGS

## Budgeting with Christina



Christina from Cornerstone Financial has been supporting Connections members with one-on-one budgeting help for quite a while. During the pandemic, the only thing that's changed is that she now meets online or on the phone. Christina has made her life's work helping folks figure out financial issues.

She says, "I enjoy answering questions to help clients understand the financial plan that we come up with

together. I know that navigating your finances can be a daunting task, but once you know what it takes to reach your goals, it no longer seems so scary and hard to obtain."

To set up a time, call us at 603 427 6966 or email [nina@connectionspeersupport.org](mailto:nina@connectionspeersupport.org)

## WRAP Through Art

WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) is a powerful set of tools we use every day to get and stay well. This month artist Janet Laird of Art for Insight, returns to explore ways for us integrate art into our WRAP plans. This time, we'll be bringing color and energy to our Daily Maintenance Plan. Join us Wed, Mar 17 at 10 AM in the center or online.



# CENTER NEWS AND HAPPENINGS

## Update from Dave S



Dave S has been a treasured member at Connections for many years, whether coordinating the crew to produce a tasty lunch, serving on our board, or as a gentle source of day-to-day support. This past year has been a hard one for Dave; a severe infection following surgery has kept him hospitalized or in assisted care since the

beginning of last summer. Recently he reported that he is making great progress:

“On Friday February 12th I graduated from having to use a walker to using a cane and I've been doing mucho exercises and my back is loosening up. Thank God for all the help I received these past eight months. As Johnny K says I'll catch you on the flip side. Ciao!”



Dave also welcomes cards and letters, so feel free to drop him a line at:

Dave Sinclair  
40 Whitehall Rd  
Rochester, NH 03867

It's great to hear from you, Dave and we're looking forward to when you can join us again!



## ...And What Have the Rest of Us Been up to?

*Beth and Karen have been making valentines ...*



*Chrissie is always crocheting something lovely,*



*And Paula whiled away a snowy afternoon practicing cartooning with Kali!*



# COMMUNITY RESOURCES

*Please send any additions or corrections to*

[info@connectionspeersupport.org](mailto:info@connectionspeersupport.org)

**Crisis Text: Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a trained crisis counselor**  
[www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org)

To connect with local resources in the Seacoast area, go to [www.211nh.org](http://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](http://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](http://www.heartspsa.org).

**Monadnock Area Peer Support Agency**, Keene NH 03431, Respite 603 352-5093 or 866-352-5093,  
[www.monadnockpsa.org](http://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](mailto: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/](http://www.aa.org/)

**NAMI NH,** [www.naminh.org](http://www.naminh.org)

**National Suicide Prevention** 1 800-273-TALK (8255),  
[www.suicidepreventionlife.org/](http://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](http://granitepathways.org)

**Safe Harbor,** 603-225-9540,  
[www.safeharborrecoverynh.org](http://www.safeharborrecoverynh.org)

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

**Seacoast Pathways,** 603-812-9031,  
[www.seacoastpathways.org/](http://www.seacoastpathways.org/)

## Transportation:

**ACT (Alliance for Community Transportation)** 603-834-6010,  
[triplink@communityrides.org](mailto:triplink@communityrides.org)

**COAST (Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation)** (603) 743-5777 [www.coastbus.org](http://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!

## **What Matters Most: A Free Advanced Directive Workshop for All Wednesdays, March 3rd and 17th, 8 10 PM**

Please join Redwing Keyssar, RN, Author, Director of Patient and Caregiver Education at UCSF's Center for Education in Palliative Care.

Monthly two-part workshops enable you to:

- Create a personalized plan to honor your wishes
- Have your questions answered
- Complete your new or revised Advance Directive for Healthcare to be notarized for free
- Receive a free deck of Go Wish Cards and a copy of Redwing Keyssar's book: "Last Acts of Kindness"

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/what-matters-most-2-part-online-advance-directive-workshop-registration-113011083192?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

## **Free PILATES Happy Mat Tuesdays, 2 PM**

It's like a 'normal' class, but without leaving the house!. We welcome participants from around the world - please check your local time. Whether you've done Pilates before or this is your 1st time, we welcome participants of all ages, levels and ability. Our sessions are streamed via Zoom, which is a free video conferencing app so that you can see the Instructor and the other participants. just like a regular class. To participate in the class all you need is a mat or a towel. An exercise block and blanket or cushion are optional. I'd also recommend a bottle of water to keep yourselves hydrated.

[https://www.eventbrite.com/e/free-pilates-happy-mat-online-tickets-122309754769?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch&keep\\_tld=1](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/free-pilates-happy-mat-online-tickets-122309754769?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch&keep_tld=1)

## **Yoga at Jamaica Pond Goes Online Sun, 11 AM**

Are you thinking that this winter is a good time to sort those shoeboxes of photos? If so, here are some ideas for caring for them. Professional archivist Connor Lee Graham will discuss how to preserve a family historian's treasures: old photographs, documents, and digitized memories. The program will highlight cost-effective steps for a home archivist to preserve family records

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/yoga-at-jamaica-pond-goes-online-off-season-weekly-zoom-classes-tickets-124550388565?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

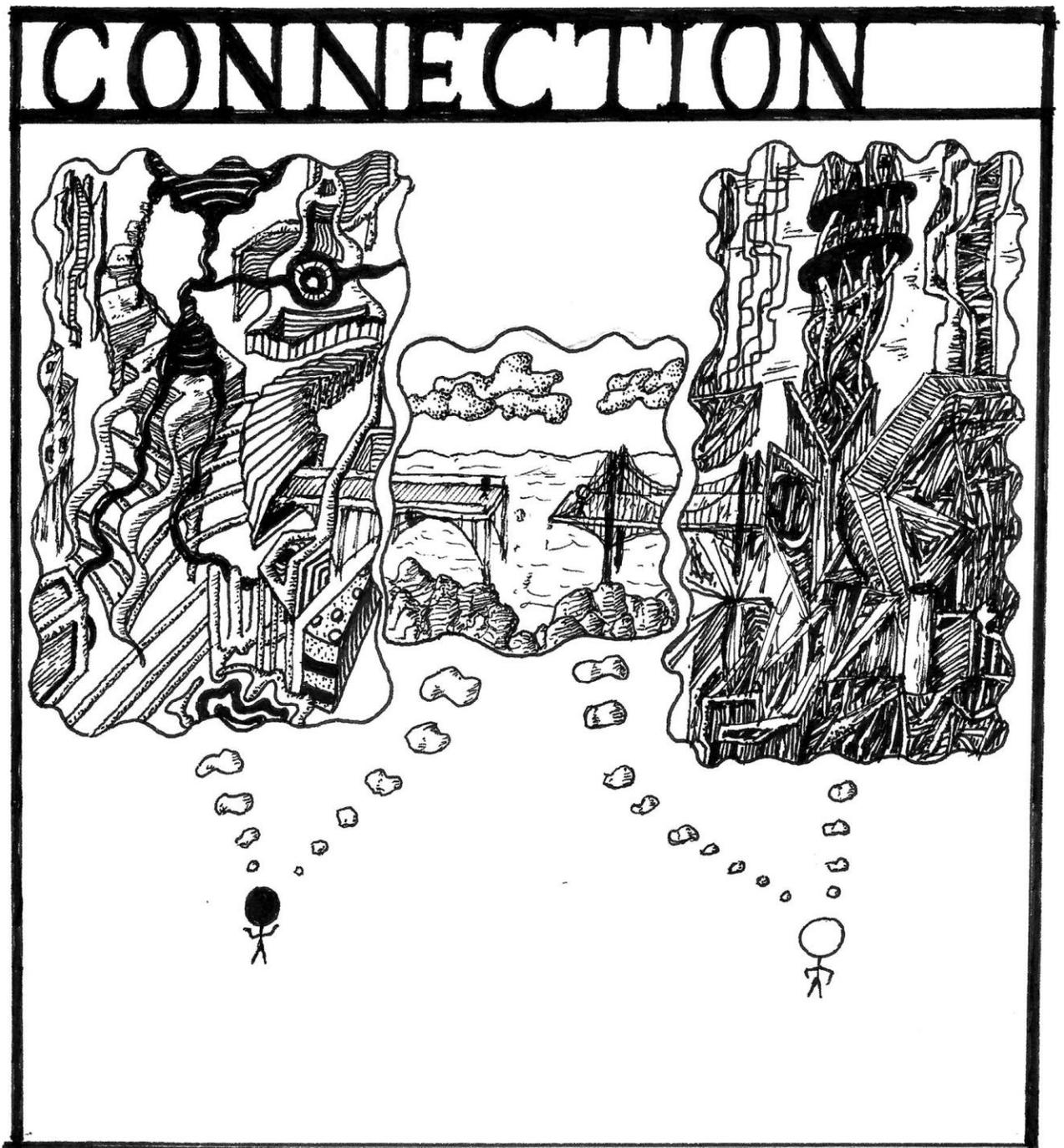
## **Taking the Woo-woo out of the Mind-Body Connection Fri, Mar 26, 12 PM**

You've likely heard of the mind-body connection: but do you know how to actually make use of it for your own well-being? Most high-performing women don't. Or what they do know has turned them off, as some kind of "woo-woo" pseudo-science. That's exactly why executive coach Randi Braun is sitting down with endocrinologist-turned-coach Dr. Karen Barnard for a science-based conversation about harnessing the intelligence of the mind-body connection

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lets-do-lunch-taking-the-woo-woo-out-of-the-mind-body-connection-tickets-133746444215?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

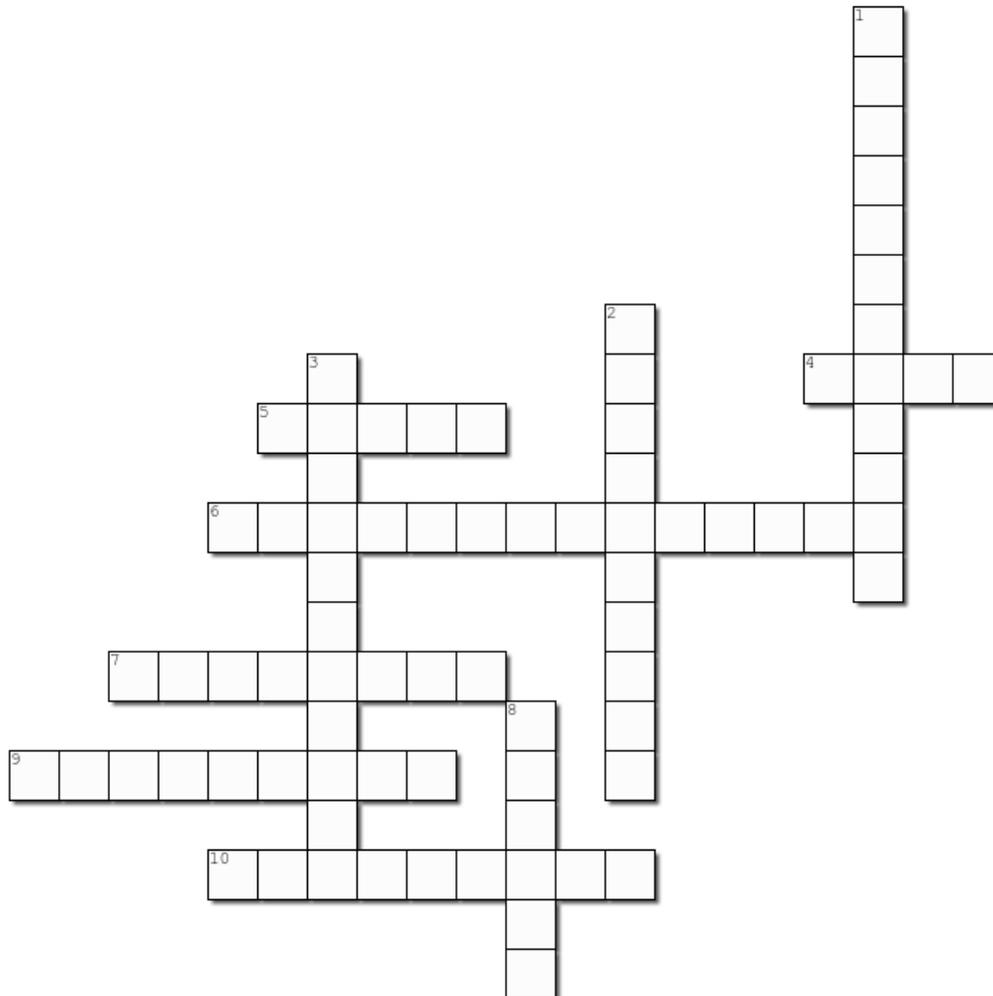
# INSPIRATION

This evocative piece comes from artist, Anand Sharma (@linesofanand on Facebook and Instagram if you would like to see more of their work), as a final presentation following their completing IPS Core Training. What comes to your mind when you hear, “connection?”



# THE MONTHLY PUZZLE

All of the answers are inside this newsletter!  
Catch up on what's happening at Connections as you finish the puzzle.



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

## Across

4. Who just graduated from a walker to a cane?
5. Who joined Kali for a snowy day group for cartooning?
6. On March 4 at 10AM, Greg and Kali will be discussing what?
7. Where are you likely to talk to Bradley, the author of the poem on pages 4-5?
9. Who can you talk to if you need support budgeting?
10. If you would like to work on your computer skills, you could visit Connections on \_\_\_\_\_ afternoon.

## Down

1. What artist drew the amazing image of connection on the previous page?
2. What is the first task of Intentional Peer Support?
3. What is the name of the artist leading the Art for Insight workshop?
8. Connections' groups are online only on Monday and \_\_\_\_\_.



**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 8:30 AM- 10 PM Monday through Friday and 5-10 PM Saturdays and Sundays: 603-427-6966**

**Connections Peer Support Center**

**544 Islington St.**

**Portsmouth, NH 03801**