

October 2021

Upcoming events

NH Mental Health Peer Alliance, Tue, Oct 18, 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, Oct 27, 5 PM. Members and staff welcome and encouraged to attend. Please contact greg@connectionspeer support.org for an invitation.

Community Meeting Fri Oct 15, 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!



Moving Forward!

Step Up/Step Down Opening Day and More



A beautiful September afternoon was the perfect time to welcome our first guests to Step Up/Step Down, Connections' new peer-driven residential program supporting those who wish to have an alternative resource as they work on their own mental health.

This has been a year-long journey and we are ecstatic to see it come to fruition, so ecstatic in fact, that we have been thinking a lot about the Intentional Peer Support principle of "moving towards," that is, focusing on where we want to go rather than what we fear or wish to avoid. In that vein, our new groups this month focus on that very topic. Please take a look inside to learn more.

CPSC SCHEDULE OCTOBER 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. Fri PM is 1 PM 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.
- **The Journey Within**
Mon 2 PM A deeper dive into what makes us tick. This is a self-reflection exercise that will be using WRAP, IPS topics, and personal journeys.
- **Dual Recovery (At Safe Harbor Recovery, 865 Islington St Portsmouth)**
Mon 3 PM There are many paths to recovery and there are also many facets when being faced with substance use disorder and a mental wellness concern. In this peer support group, we have a chance to discuss the frustrations as well as the gifts that bring us together to share our experiences and managing systems to become healthier.
- **Assertiveness**
Tue 10 AM Clear, Honest, respectful communication is one of the foundational practices of Intentional Peer Support, but sometimes it is difficult to do, especially when we are stating our own needs. This group explores ways we can advocate for ourselves and maintain our boundaries in a respectful way.

Connections will be closed Mon, Oct 11 for Columbus Day.

- **WRAP/IPS Topics through Art**
Wed 10 AM This will be a place to visualize how we want to move forward and what that may look like for you. There will be acrylic painting supplies available. Feel free to bring your own items to add to your projects.
- **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!
- **Greeting Card Workshop**
Thu 10 AM Join Marybeth and friends as we explore lots of techniques for creating our own greeting cards.
- **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.
- **Energize Your Life**
Fri 10 AM This is a time to explore different ways to harness that energy to increase our motivation, spark up new plans and ideas of moving forward which is also an IPS topic
- **Self-Care for the Weekend (online only)**
Fri 2 PM Coming up with a self-care plan for the weekend. Some ideas could be self-care techniques or new hobby ideas.
- **Calming our Lives (online only)**
Fri 3 PM Most of us have a lot of frenetic energy patterns that can make it hard to focus on what we can actually "control." Our home environments may not be ideal or we may experience difficult relationships. In this time, we will discuss ways to calm ourselves in order to focus on what is actually important in our lives.

CPSC SCHEDULE OCTOBER 2021

October Special Programming

Community Picnic, Wed Oct 6, 11 AM

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

After Hours: Portsmouth Art Walk, Fri Oct 1, 5-8 PM Join us for a walk about downtown Portsmouth as we explore local galleries. Please call us at 603 427 6966 for meeting place and time.

Music for Mind and Spirit Tue, Oct 5, 12, 19, 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

- The link for all online groups is: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/709997085>. If you're new to GoToMeeting, you will be prompted to download the app.
- Should you have any questions, just call us at 603 427-6966.
- 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 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 building may close for bad weather; we'll still be available online.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:15-10:00	AM Remote Only AM Check-in 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
10:15-11:15	Hearing Voices 11:00	Assertiveness	WRAP/IPS Topics through Art	Greeting Card Workshop	Moving Forward
12-1	BYO Lunch Check-in	BYO Lunch Check-in	Community Lunch Check In	Community Lunch Check-in	PM Remote Only 1 PM Check-in 1 PM Walking Group
1:15-2:15	Self-Reflection and Insight	Music for Mind and Spirit 1:30- 2:30	A.R.T/Board Games	Anxiety/ Depression	2:00 Self-Care Plan
3:00-3:45-	Dual Recovery				Calming our Lives

CENTER NEWS AND HAPPENINGS

Step Up/Step Welcomes First Guests

Below are some photos from SUSD's opening week. The voluntary program has 24-hour peer support in a home-like environment, designed for stays of 30-90 days. Guests create their own goals for their stay, and may work, attend school, visit with family or friends, and otherwise retain their local support system.

One of SUSD's first guests heard about the program through a presentation at a local Behavioral Health Unit:

"I knew I needed a program, but didn't know what, then I heard about SUSD. Everyone has been so welcoming. This place has such a good vibe to it. I'm thrilled; you have no idea!"



A community journal is available for anyone to add their thoughts. We hope to create a common history of SUSD.

Each guest has their own bedroom.



All guests share common living areas

CENTER NEWS AND HAPPENINGS

Halloween Celebration: Call for Ideas

Traditionally, our Halloween party has been a highlight of the Connections social calendar. A number of us lamented its absence last year in response to the pandemic and hoped for a celebration this year. So, we put a callout to our members and friends: what are your best ideas for a safe and fun way to celebrate the holiday together? Mention them when you visit, give us a call at 603 427 6966, or email nina@connectionspeersupport.org

On September 14, the staff of the Sonatina Center of Dover began the first of two scheduled six-week therapeutical musical residencies at Connections. One of our members was initially unsure about the group, but then submitted this reflection:

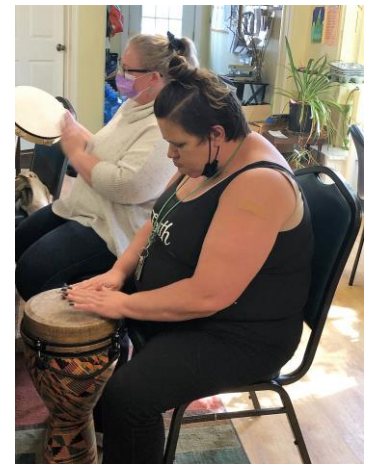
Chrissie's Reflections on Music for Mind and Spirit



New Hampshire
State Council on the Arts

I kind of had low expectations, however I was stunned during and after Emma's music group. I felt like it was the most connecting thing I have done since being at Connections. Emma is both calming and energizing. She knew how to bring the beats and music out of us. As part of the group, we looked up each of the instruments online. All of the participants swapped their instruments with each other so each of us could experiment with each instrument. I will definitely be here for the remainder

of the groups. Five-star rating! *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

Maureen's story: From fear-based to hope-based

It started when I was about 12 years old. Every night, when I was supposed to be sleeping, I worried about what would happen the next day at school. Who would I sit with at lunch? Will I be picked to play dodge ball? How should I wear my hair? My thoughts would race continuously into the wee hours of the morning.

Many years later, after several psychiatric hospitalizations, I was diagnosed with psychotic depression and generalized anxiety. I was given prescriptions to take at bedtime as well as going to counseling. These measures helped to an extent, but I still fretted about what was going to happen.

During Intentional Peer Support training at Connections Peer Support Center, I learned about hope-based thinking, as opposed to the fear-based I've had all my life. It hit me more personally when I spoke to a peer on a warmline in another part of New Hampshire.

Two different times I called him, listing all my current worries. On the second call, he questioned me, asking if me if those were hope-based, or fear-based thoughts. I realized, for the first time, that I actually could control my runaway thoughts, and think about hope-based outcomes.

A circumstance where I used my newfound knowledge arose after a breakup with my boyfriend. We had just started going to a new church together before parting ways. After breaking up, he wanted me to go back to the old church as friends. I refused to do that.

So, then I was left with some fear-based thoughts about going to the new church solo. But, thanks to my IPS training, I switched to the hope-based thoughts, leading me to worship by myself, learn more about the Bible, and make new friends, beginning a new life.

Right now, I'm facing some scary health issues, but except when I'm super anxious, I've been able to think about positive, hope-based scenarios.

I am thankful for what I learned in IPS, acquiring tools to manage my constant worrying.



James

September Collages from James, Paula, and Betsy



Paula



Betsy

OUR VOICES

A Seasonal Offering from Nicole



A Poem from Kirsten

Lightness
Darkness
Who can say?
Which is which?
What can?
In the light you see less
Than in the shadow
But more
Than you see
In the darkness
Unless. . .
Your eyes are for
Seeing in the darkness

...And A Favorite Recipe from Dave

Chewy Sugar Cookies

Preheat oven at 350 degrees:

2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup flour
1 tsp baking soda
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp baking powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt

1 cup room-temperature unsalted butter
1 cup plus 2 Tb granulated sugar
2 Tb light brown sugar
1 egg
2 tsp vanilla

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar for rolling

Directions to be adhered to with love and affection:

Combine all dry ingredients in a bowl and mix thoroughly and set aside.

In another large bowl cream together butter and sugars until light and fluffy.

Add and beat in egg and thoroughly cream together.

Add vanilla and cream the same.

Add dry ingredients and mix thoroughly.

Measure out 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Tb portions of the dough and roll them into balls with your hands.

Roll the balls in granulated sugar lightly and place on ungreased sheet pan.

Bake for approximately 10 to 12 minutes.

With a quick jerk of a spatula remove the cookies and place on a cooling rack.

Store the cookies in a fancy cookie jar for safe keeping!
8-)

Feel the pleasure of having cookie snacks ready for the multitude of snacking participants.

~Dave Sinclair

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

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!

Boring Comics: Writing and Drawing Stories In-Between

Sat, Oct 23, 3-7 PM

Artist Annie Canto will lead this Free School exploring the range of rigid, radical, and reflexive storytelling methods showcased in alternative comics. Participants will explore the transversive and inclusive potential of comics as a medium and develop skills in storytelling propelled by dialogue in order to see the potential of a single loaded panel. With daily writing prompts that encourage a deeper look into the everyday, the class will emphasize the possibilities of building worlds through serialized scenes. With a series of connected prompts, participants will wander imaginary or autobiographical universes through character development, dialogue, scene creation, and free writing.

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/reissue-freeschool-05-boring-comics-writing-drawing-stories-in-between-tickets-170190649815?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch&keep_tld=1

The Write Stuff: An Introduction to Poetry Therapy

Sun, Oct 10 8:45 9:45 AM

In this friendly and fun session that's part of the hub's *Made For Each Other* World Mental Health Day event, writer and poetry therapy practitioner, Shelley Tracey, will take you on a journey through a series of uplifting and thought-provoking quotes, images and poems, all on the theme of happiness. She'll also help you explore and express your responses to these creatively, and (as Wordsworth, who knew a few things about all of this, once said) "Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart."

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-write-stuff-an-introduction-to-poetry-therapy-tickets-173528276747?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch&keep_tld=1

The Menopause Cafe

The Menopause Café is a safe and informal forum for people wishing to talk about all things menopause. It aims to provide a relaxed environment for people to ask questions and share experiences about perimenopause and menopause and to learn from each other. https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-menopause-cafe-tickets-158722285629?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch&keep_tld=1

And last, but not least, an actual in-person event:

Art Around Town Gallery Walk

Oct 1, 5-8 PM

A self-guided walkable tour of Portsmouth art galleries on the first Friday of each month. As a thriving creative community rich in history, Portsmouth retains and honors its past while continuously cultivating an ebullient, exciting contemporary art scene. Within its early-nineteenth century brick facades, cobblestone sidewalks, and urban streetscapes, the collective Portsmouth art galleries represent the work of international and national artists from as distant as Europe, New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles and as near as regional New England. The link lists the participating galleries.

http://arroundtown.org/the_galleries.html

INSPIRATION

Looking Back

I was...

I needed...

I thought...

Looking Forward

I am...

I have...

I know...

Goal 1

Goal 2

Goal 3

THE MONTHLY PUZZLE

Created with TheTeachersCorner.net Word Search Maker

Moving Towards

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

GRATITUDE
CALM
ENERGY
PRIORITIES

ASSERTIVE
PEACE
RECOVERY
FUTURE

MOTIVATION
GOALS
WELLNESS
HOPE

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