

# January 2021

## Upcoming events

**NH Mental Health Peer Alliance, Tue., Jan 19, 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., Jan 27, 4 PM** Members and staff welcome and encouraged to attend. Please contact [greg@connectionspeersupport.org](mailto:greg@connectionspeersupport.org) for an invitation.

**Budgeting with Christina from Cornerstone Financial.** This is one-on-one support by phone or online. Please call or email to reserve a spot. [nina@connectionspeersupport.org](mailto:nina@connectionspeersupport.org)

**Art for Insight**  
**Wed, Jan 13, 10 AM**  
We welcome back Connections favorite, artist Janet Laird, to explore ways to bring color, form, and creativity to our WRAP plans for wellness.



## Step Up/Step Down is NOT the Latest Dance Craze: But it is Exciting and it's Coming to Connections



*A peer-driven, voluntary, residential program for those needing to step up their support, but seeking to avoid a hospital stay, or step down to transition back after a stay in a behavioral health facility. Read all about it on page 4!*

# CPSC SCHEDULE JANUARY 2021

Connections will be closed  
Friday, January 1, New Year's  
Day, and Monday, January 18,  
Martin Luther King Day.

- 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.
- Hearing Voices Group (**online only**)  
**Monday 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 and genres are welcomed and encouraged.
- Dual Recovery (**online only**)  
Thurs 4 PM. For those struggling with substance use disorder and mental health issues, to share coping strategies and support each other.
- WRAP Topics  
**Tue 2 PM or Wed 10 AM.** Wellness Recovery Action Plan, is a process where you explore and create a plan for yourself to stay well, respond to stressors, or even how to respond to a crisis. It is a powerful evidence-based wellness tool.
- Art with Paul: Recovery through Art  
**Wed 11 AM.** Each week we will talk about different aspects of recovery and complete a related art project that visualizes the theme.
- Computer Skills  
**Wed 2 PM.** A time to get comfortable using a computer. Topics based on member interests.
- Job Skills  
**Wed 3 PM** Are you looking for a job? Whether you want to brush up your resume or practice for an interview, we're here to support your success.
- IPS Topics  
**Thur 10 AM** in center. Intentional Peer Support is the model we practice here at Connections. This group gives us a chance to learn and deepen our practice.
- Goals and the New Year  
**Thur 11 AM.** A time for reset our priorities! We will create goals and support each other in moving forward with our lives.
- 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.
- Assertiveness Skills  
**Thur 3 PM.** Each week we will brainstorm, role play, and practice self-advocacy skills we need speak up for ourselves.
- A.R.T. (**online only**)  
**Friday 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 JANUARY 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		Music Group	IPS/WRAP Topics	IPS Topics	A.R.T.
11-11:45	Hearing Voices	Adult Coloring	Art w/Paul: Recovery Through Art	Goals in the New Year	
12-1		Closed for Cleaning			
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	Arts and Crafts	Computer Skills	Anxiety/ Depression	Grief and Loss
3:00-3:45-	Dual Recovery	IPS Topics	Job Skills	Assertiveness	

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday groups will be held at our center at 544 Islington St, Portsmouth, as well as online. Monday and Friday groups are online only. The center is available for drop-ins, but we suggest you call ahead to make sure there is room.

Due to social distancing requirements, for groups held in center, you will need to call us at 603-427-6966 by 4 PM the day before to reserve a spot or 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. Please call or visit our website to learn about the additional procedures we have in place for everyone's safety.

Connections' physical center may close because of snow and ice. If the weather is iffy please call to make sure we are open. In case of snow closure, all programming will still be available online

**Join groups online or by phone through this link:**

**Please join any group from your computer, tablet or smartphone.**

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/709997085>

**New to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:**

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/709997085>

**You can also dial in using your phone.**

**United States: +1 (571) 317-3122 Access**

**Code: 709-997-085**

# STEP UP/STEP DOWN COMING SOON

## A Voluntary Peer-Driven Alternative to Hospitalization

*Providing a place to “step up” if their mental health is deteriorating (or) a safe, supportive environment into which they can “step down” after a stay in the hospital, before returning home*

We all know someone or we can speak from personal experience about having an inpatient stay at a psychiatric facility when – if only there had been a better option for some extra support in the community – we

might have made it a brief hospital stay or avoided it altogether. That’s where a step-up / step-down program comes in.

### What is It?

A step-up / step-down is a 30 to 90-day residential program that supports people who are experiencing a mental health crisis. It aims to support people’s recovery by:

- Providing a place to “step up” if their mental health is deteriorating. It is a less intensive option than going to the hospital to help them through their crisis. It can also help people avoid having a prolonged stay at a hospital emergency room because there are no hospital beds available.
- Providing a safe, supportive environment into which they can “step down” after a stay in the hospital, before returning home.

Our step-up / step-down program will be a house for three residents that is staffed 24 hours/day by trained peers. We will be one of four programs in the state, thanks to funding from the NH Department of Health and Human Services. This is a priority in New Hampshire’s 10-year mental health plan because it helps people avoid a hospitalization or have a briefer stay in the hospital – but it also means significant savings in Medicaid dollars when people are able to avoid or minimize an inpatient stay.

## STEP UP/STEP DOWN COMING SOON

Ours will be one of four programs that are opening in the state in the coming months, the others being HEARTS Peer Support Center in Nashua, Monadnock Peer Support Center in Keene, and On the Road to Wellness in Manchester. We are developing these programs in partnership with the NH Bureau of Mental Health Services, who understands the value of making these peer-run programs. By sharing their own lived experience of recovery, peer support staff are able to help people to develop their own goals, create strategies for self--empowerment, and take concrete steps towards building fulfilling, self--determined lives for themselves.

### Where Will it Be?

We are looking for this program's home! The location of the program is one of the missing pieces of the puzzle. Connections Peer Support Center serves 24 communities in eastern Rockingham County, so we hope to locate it in a town that is closer to the center of our region. We anticipate that it will be a 3-bedroom house with common space for programming, office space for staff, and the usual amenities such as kitchen, bathroom, living room, etc.

We will be working with the other peer support centers, the Bureau of Mental Health Services, the hospitals, and our

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*The program is voluntary and keeps people close to home and our personal support networks*

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members to make this an alternative to hospitalization, one that allows its participants the opportunity to be near their community and the people who care about and support them.

Good things are coming, so stay tuned and look for our updates in this newsletter each month!

## UPCOMING GROUPS

### From Noah: Young Men's Group



*Tyler and Noah brainstorming*

A place to be in a circle of your peers. This group provides an opportunity for men under 30 to come together and consider topics important to us; interests, relationships, recovery and wellness, etc., without judgement. We decide the topics ourselves. Being in these smaller peer groups can allow us to share things we might find hard to share in groups of mixed age or gender. Give us a call for details as they become available!

### From Betsy: A.R.T.-What Is It?

It's a new group coming to the Connections Peer Support Center line-up. A.R.T stands for whatever type of arts or crafts relaxes us. We can talk as well. It will be meeting every Friday at 10 AM, starting Friday January 8. Just a reminder, the center will be closed Friday, January 1, 2021-for New Year's Day

### From Darin: Walking Group for the Hale and Hearty

At 1 PM on Mondays and Fridays, we will be braving the weather and exploring local trails, such as The Urban Forestry Center and Odiorne Point. Call 603 570 8899 before noon to confirm, or if you need a ride.

### ***Reboot Your WRAP Plan for the New Year***



Artist and WRAP facilitator, Janet Laird last joined us in the fall with great ideas for bringing creativity to our WRAP plans. Since then, we have been using her ideas weekly in Wednesday's Recovery Through Art group. On Wednesday, January 13, at 10 AM, Janet will again bring her unique methods of using art prompts, similar to journal prompts, to help us visualize what is important to achieve and increase wellness in our lives.

## MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

### Pity Party

I had a "pity party"  
So glad you could attend

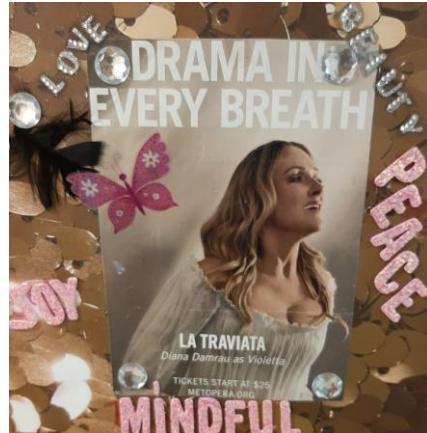
For it's the kind of party  
That you really need a friend

I pitied me for failing  
The purpose of this party  
Is still not very clear  
I only know how good it felt  
To know that you were near

And if sometime you feel the need  
To have a party too  
Remember I am always here  
To help you pity you!

~Angela S.

*Paula was in a reflective mood*



*Chrissie reports this is really called the "virus stitch!"*



...And even in 2020, the holiday season  
rolled on!



# 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.heartpsa.org](http://www.heartpsa.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 COMMUNITY EVENTS (ALL FREE!)

## New Year Meditation with Beth Leas

Fri, Jan 1, 3 PM

Who doesn't love a new beginning? A chance to reinvent your life, yourself, your way of being in this world, a blank slate. So, as we stand on the precipice of the New Year, I invite you to join us for FREE Meditation. We'll step into the portal of a new beginning together - harnessing the collective energy as we release 2020 and step fully into 2021. Beth will guide you and offer you practical advice on creating your own meditation space and practice. Suitable for both new and experienced meditators.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/new-year-meditation-tickets-131678641361?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

## MoveCamp

Thursday, Jan 14, 12 PM

MoveCamp is about getting people moving and having fun at the same time. Powered by the Green Beaver company, we create an inclusive environment where no matter your fitness or skill level you have a place to move your body free from judgement. Bring your co-workers, family, babies, children, your bestie, your neighbor - all are welcome! It's so fun to move together! Join us for a free workout, feel good music and tons of giveaways at every event! Be sure to register for each event for a chance to win amazing prizes from The Green Beaver Company. It feels good to move!

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/movecamp-virtual-fitness-events-tickets-122807182589?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

## Meal Planning Made Easy

Multiple times: See below

Looking to become better at meal planning and creating meals with less effort? This class, hosted by your Hannaford Dietitian, is a can't miss opportunity for home chefs looking to develop dishes with fresh flavor, all while keeping them nourishing and healthy. Participants will receive a link to join the webinar in their confirmation email.

- Thur, Jan 5, 4 PM
- Wed, Jan 6, 10 AM
- Fri, Jan 8, 10 AM
- Fri, Jan 8, 3 PM
- Mon, Jan 11, 4 PM
- Tue, Jan 12, 1 PM
- Thur, Jan 14, 4 PM
- Fri, Jan 15 at, 1 PM
- Fri, Jan 15, 2 PM
- Wed, Jan 20, 9 AM
- Fri, Jan 22, 1PM
- Fri, Jan 22, 2 PM
- Wed, Jan 27, 10 AM

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/meal-planning-made-easy-tickets-117581353995?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

## Indigenous Stories: People of the Dawnland

Tue, Jan 12, 7 – 8:30 PM

"People of the Dawnland," an interactive exhibit at Strawbery Banke, is a space for learning more about the Abenaki, People of the Dawnland, past and present, by exploring their culture, arts, foodways and storytelling traditions. Objects found by archaeologists in the Puddle Dock neighborhood of Strawbery Banke include pottery and stone tools; and demonstrate that Native people have been here for millennia. Anne Jennison and Dr. Alexandra Martin will share their experiences and thoughts about creating the exhibit. Registration is required. The Zoom link will be sent the week of the event.

<https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/library/news/indigenous>

## INSPIRATION

# THE BEST YEAR

OUT WITH THE OLD { 20\_\_ }

IN WITH THE NEW { 20\_\_ }

**2** FAVORITE MEMORIES

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**3** THINGS I'M  
GRATEFUL FOR

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**1** HARD LESSON  
I LEARNED!

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**1** THING I DID THIS  
YEAR I'M PROUD OF

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**3** PLACES I  
WANT TO GO

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**2** WAYS I CAN  
HELP OTHERS

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**1** THING I WANT TO GET BETTER AT

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**2** THINGS I AM  
LOOKING  
FORWARD TO

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**3** NEW THINGS I WANT TO TRY

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## THE MONTHLY PUZZLE

### A New Start in a New Year



REVIVE  
REVAMP  
REBUILD  
RECOVER  
REBOOT  
RELAX  
REFLECT  
REALIZE  
REFRESH  
REALIGN  
RECHARGE  
REJUVENATE

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/1780328/>

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**