

May 2022

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### Upcoming events

**NH Mental Health Peer Alliance, Tue May, 17, 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 use this link <https://meet.goto.com/709997085> to join us.

**Board of Directors, Wed, May 25, 5 PM.** Members and staff welcome and encouraged to attend Through this link: <https://meet.goto.com/160387205>

**Community Meeting, Mon, May 9, 10:15 AM** 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!  
<https://meet.goto.com/709997085>



## Springtime at Connections



*Spring arrives*

In May, we welcome lilacs, Connections' first picnic of the year, and Mental Health Month. In observance of the latter, we have a conversation with Tom Grinley, a long-time and passionate advocate for peer support here in NH. He has a lot to say and many ideas about ways to get involved in advocating and creating real change for those of us living with mental health issues.

## AMPLIFYING OUR VOICES



As director of the Office of Consumer and Family Services at the New Hampshire Bureau of Mental Health Services, Tom Grinley has a job title that can give people pause. It sounds like it might have to do with warranties. Once, he relates, someone called his office to find out why they were charged sales tax for a doughnut at one grocery store, but not at another.

But, as he explains, “The primary vision of what my office does is to amplify the voices of those with mental health challenges. I do quality service reviews for mental health centers and help folks who feel they have been mistreated file complaints. We have a seat at the table when the state makes a policy that affects each of our lives. I am proud of that work.”

Tom’s work in peer support grew out of his own lived experience. “I was working as a clinical coordinator in a program that worked with folks who had been dual diagnosed with a mental illness and developmental disability. While there, I had an episode and was hospitalized. I then found out that I had lost my job. Officially, my position had been eliminated, but I later found out that was not the case. I was already on the Mental Health Planning and Advisory Council. Through that work, I began working as a program planner. I was there for less than a year when my current position came up, and I knew that was what I wanted.

“You see, when I was hospitalized, I felt shame. I had no self-esteem. I completely withdrew.

“Then one day, I came into the cafeteria and another patient challenged me to tell my story. To my surprise, something about support from peers made me feel safe enough. I told them my story, things that I had never told family or therapists, things I had never told anyone.”

“That marked the first day of my journey to recovery.

“So for me, a job where a diagnosis was a requirement, where I could give a voice to the power of peer support, was a dream come true. But it can’t be just my voice. People need to speak up so all our voices are heard.”

He sees fighting stigma as still being the biggest challenge. “I hear clinicians refer to ‘a borderline.’ No, that is a *person* with borderline personality disorder. Not a ‘schizo,’ a *person* with schizophrenia.”

He tells of a local radio DJ joking on air that she was having a bipolar day.

“I wrote the station a letter. Mental illness not a punchline to a joke, mental illness should never be the punchline of a joke. And I got an apology. I am constantly trying to correct it. We don’t talk about people that way.”

Reflecting on his work in advocacy, Tom notes, “On my email signature, I have a Latin phrase that translates as ‘Nothing about us without us.’ That’s so important. There’s so much at the state and federal level that can affect us. The state is always rewriting rules. I make sure to give input so that peer voices are heard and peer support is protected.”

# AMPLIFYING OUR VOICES

As an example of what can change when that happens, he offers, “The secure psychiatric unit was in a prison under the Department of Corrections. It didn’t belong there. Now it’s being moved to New Hampshire Hospital and operated by the Department of Health and Human Services. It took two years, but it’s happening.”

Another success he mentions is getting a ban on conversion therapy. “That took years, though it is well known to be ineffective and actually harmful. Then this year there was an attempt to turn back.

“I get feedback. I changed the way people think about mental health.”

Tom says the work is far from finished.

“Currently, people have stepped up to develop a plan for our peer workforce. Recently, there has been investment in New Hampshire’s 10-year mental health plan. People showing up has been crucial.

“In February, there were 350 vacancies in 10 mental health centers in New Hampshire. There is a staffing crisis. We can’t get services we might need. We need adequate funds, more resources into the system. Again, peer voices will be crucial to making that happen.

“Intentional Peer Support began in New Hampshire. It is an entire philosophy that is built around self-determination. We are seeing peer support positions being added to hospitals and mental health centers. We need to protect those positions, so that peer support is not co-opted into something it is not.”

Asked about what else people need to do, he replies, “Constantly keeping an eye on these little things that might affect us – you never know where they are going to come from. Keep yelling and getting ourselves recognized, we’re here – listen to us!

“The New Hampshire Mental Health Peer Alliance is a great organization. We track legislation and work to make people understand that stigma is discrimination.”

Does he get tired? “Always. Fighting the same things over and over again can be exhausting, but the small wins -- the DJ’s apology, the secure psychiatric unit moving to New Hampshire Hospital – those keep me going.”

Editor’s note: *Since this interview, Tom has accepted a position with the Office of Quality Assurance and Integrity. He will continue to amplify the voice of those of us with mental health challenges. We wish him all the best.*



*The NH Mental Health Peer Alliance is made up of people with lived experience with mental illness, supporting peers to advocate for equal rights and a recovery-based mental health system. We would love to have you join us! Please be in touch.*

[info@nhmhp.org](mailto:info@nhmhp.org) or 603) 809-7884

# OUR VOICES

## Hickory Nut Farm



Wow! What a great event to go to; a goat farm in Lee, NH! We were a small group that took the trip. We were greeted by the adult goats. There were many in that pen, all different colors and, I think, a couple of different breeds, some with big, floppy ears. They had a wooden playground for

the goats to climb on

We petted them and moved onto the next pen which had the kids (baby goats.)



The owner came out of the barn to talk to us. She brought milk bottles for us to feed the kids. That ended up being the best part for me. We were told to hold the nipple as the kid would pull the nipple off. After the fun of that, the farmer asked if we would like to go into the pen with the kids.

It was great fun petting the kids. They all wanted to nibble on us.

Pictures of our great event were taken by our Program Coordinator, Nina.

~Beth



## Art at Connections: We sense a theme (Perhaps we all are ready to welcome spring)



## NEWS AND HAPPENINGS

### Thanks to all who came to our Portsmouth Flatbread Fundraiser on April 13



As always,  
we had a

blast hanging out with good company and eating lots of great food.

Thanks again to all the friends who stopped by and made this annual event a great success.

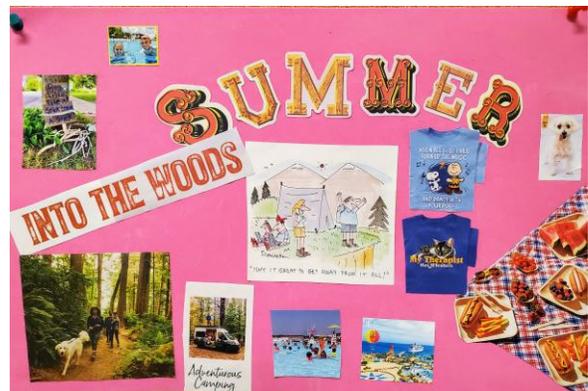


Save the Date: June 7 & 8

## NH GIVES

And speaking of annual events (when it rains, it pours!) NH Gives, Connections' biggest fundraiser of the year is coming up on June 7 & 8. You will be hearing a lot more about it, but in a nutshell, it's a 24-hour online fundraising event for nonprofits all over the state of NH. It's a chance for you to support many amazing causes, and we hope that Connections is one of them. Stay tuned!

### Vision Boards are Happening



Another way of articulating your goals and having a concrete reminder about your own priorities, vision boards can also be a lot of fun. Karen had a very clear vision of summer during our Vision Board workshop. It looks amazing. We want that summer too!

# Connections Peer Support



544 Islington St, Portsmouth, NH 03801  
603-427-6966

Center Hours: 8:30-5:30 Mon-Thur,  
8:30-4:30 Fri

Warmline Telephone Support:  
5-10 PM 7 days a week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
9:15 AM Check-in <b>2</b> 10:15 Interpersonal Communication 11:00 Hearing Voices 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 Tolerating Tough Times 2:15 Dual Recovery*	9:15 AM Check-in <b>3</b> 10:15 IPS Topics 11:00 Meditative Art 11:30 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 Assertiveness and Self-Advocacy	9:15 AM Check-in <b>4</b> 10:15 Trauma and Grounding Techniques 11:30 Community Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 Compassion and Forgiveness for Self and Others
9:15 AM Check-in <b>9</b> <b>10:15 Community Meeting</b> 11:00 Hearing Voices 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 Tolerating Tough Times 2:15 Dual Recovery*	9:15 AM Check-in <b>10</b> 10:15 IPS Topics 11:00 Meditative Art 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 Assertiveness and Self-Advocacy	9:15 AM Check-in <b>11</b> 10:15 Trauma and Grounding Techniques 11:30 Community Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 Compassion and Forgiveness for Self and Others
9:15 AM Check-in <b>16</b> 10:15 Interpersonal Communication 11:00 Hearing Voices 11:30 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 Tolerating Tough Times 2:15 Dual Recovery*	9:15 AM Check-in <b>17</b> 10:15 <b>NH Peer Alliance</b> 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 Assertiveness and Self-Advocacy	9:15 AM Check-in <b>18</b> <b>10:00 Community Excursion: Odiorne Point State Park and Science Center. Includes lunch. (Sign up by Friday, May 13!)</b>
9:15 AM Check-in <b>23</b> <b>10:15 Guest Speaker: Affirming Spaces</b> 11:00 Hearing Voices 11: 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 Tolerating Tough Times 2:15 Dual Recovery	9:15 AM Check-in <b>24</b> 10:15 IPS Topics 11:00 Meditative Art 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group <b>1:15 Seasonal Art w/Barbara</b>	9:15 AM Check-in <b>25</b> 10:15 Trauma and Grounding Techniques 11:30 Community Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 Compassion and Forgiveness <b>5:00 Board of Director' Meeting</b>
<b>Closed for Memorial Day</b>   <small>© wondercliparts.com</small>	9:15 AM Check-in <b>31</b> 10:15 IPS Topics 11:00 Meditative Art 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 Assertiveness and Self-Advocacy	<b>When You Just Want to Talk to Someone</b> Our trained peers are here to listen 365 days a year from 5-10 PM. If you are having a great day and want to share your success, or having a tough day and need some support, give us a call at <b>603 427 6966</b>

# May 2022 Schedule

For more information, including group descriptions, please visit our website:

[connectionspeersupport.org](http://connectionspeersupport.org)

Or call us at 603 427 6966



Thursday	Friday	
9:15 AM Check-in <b>5</b> 10:15 Anxiety and Depression 11:30 11:30 Community Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 Abstract Art Workshop w/ Mary	9:15 AM Check-in <b>6</b> 10:15 Emotional Regulation Skills 11 Visit Gather/Hannaford 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 WRAP Planning/Art Journaling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All services free of charge.</li> <li>• No referral needed.</li> <li>• We offer transportation.</li> <li>• Groups available in person or online.</li> <li>• In case of bad weather, the center may close but groups still run online.</li> <li>• Masks are optional.</li> </ul>
9:15 AM Check-in <b>12</b> 10:15 Anxiety and Depression 11:30 Community Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 Nutrition Topics	9:15 AM Check-in <b>13</b> 10:15 Emotional Regulation Skills 11 Visit Gather/Hannaford 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 WRAP Planning/Art Journaling	
9:15 AM Check-in <b>19</b> 10:15 Anxiety and Depression 11:30 Community Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 Nutrition Topics	9:15 AM Check-in <b>20</b> 10:15 Emotional Regulation Skills 11:00 Visit Gather/Hannaford 12:00 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 WRAP Planning/Art Journaling	
9:15 AM Check-in <b>26</b> 10:15 Anxiety and Depression 11:30 Community Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 Nutrition Topics	9:15 AM Check-in <b>27</b> 10:15 Emotional Regulation Skills 11 Visit Gather/Hannaford 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Walking Group 1:15 WRAP Planning/Art Journaling	

## Warmline



## Step-Up Step-Down: Taking Peer Support to a Whole New Level

Connections Community is our peer-driven, voluntary residential program. Staffed by peer specialists, we are here to support you in achieving your mental health goals. For more information, please see our website

[connectionspeersupport.org/susd](http://connectionspeersupport.org/susd)

# 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:

**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 [www.monadnockpsa.org](http://www.monadnockpsa.org)

## Legal Help:

NH Legal Assistance 603 431-7411

NH Pro Bono 800-639-5290

Legal Advice & Referral Center

800-639-5290

Disability Rights Center:

800-834-1721

## Meals:

Salvation Army Food Truck parked on behind Middle St Baptist

Church, Portsmouth: Dinner Daily

5:00-6:00PM, Breakfast included

for next day. Takeout only

**Middle St Baptist Church, 18 Court**

**St, Portsmouth Community Lunch,**

Wed 12 PM-1 PM. Takeout only

**St. John's Church, Chapel St**

**Portsmouth Community Lunch:**

Thur 12-1 PM. Takeout only

## Community Health Services:

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

**location: 8 Greenleaf Woods,**

**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- 5 PM by appointment, Friday**

**10 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.suicidepreventionelife.org/](http://www.suicidepreventionelife.org/)**

## Granite Recovery Centers

855 712 7784

<https://www.graniterecoverycenters.com/treatment-program/mental-health>

## Granite Pathways Rehabilitation

**Services 10 Ferry St, Suite 319,**

**Concord NH [granitepathways.org](http://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/>

[www.smhc-nh.org/](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](mailto:triplink@communityrides.org)**

**COAST (Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation)**

603-743-5777, [www.coastbus.org](http://www.coastbus.org)

# FREE COMMUNITY EVENTS

Here we focus on events in the Portsmouth community, with an occasional, distant online offering. Please note, that while all events are free, you may need to pre-register; just follow the links or call!

## Portsmouth Library Events

### Weekly Meditation

Wednesdays, 12:15 PM

A rotating roster of local teachers. Online only at this time.

<https://portsmouthpl.librarycalendar.com/events/weekly-meditation-58>

### Local History: Discovering the History of your House

Tue, May 10, 7 PM

Are you interested in learning about your house? Ever wonder who owned your home or how old it might be? Local resident and museum curator John Mayer will provide an introduction to resources you can use to explore the history of your house including deeds, maps, newspapers, and online sources maps, as well as resources available locally. <https://portsmouthpl.librarycalendar.com/event/house>

### Classics Book Club: Fahrenheit 451

Tue, May 3, 7 PM

Guy Montag is a fireman. His job is to destroy the most illegal of commodities, the printed book, along with the houses in which they are hidden. Montag never questions the destruction and ruin his actions produce, returning each day to his bland life and wife, Mildred, who spends all day with her television "family." But when he meets an eccentric young neighbor, Clarisse, who introduces him to a past where people didn't live in fear, and to a present where one sees the world through the ideas in books instead of the mindless chatter of television, Montag begins to question everything he has ever known. <https://portsmouthpl.librarycalendar.com/event/classics-book-club-fahrenheit-451>

### Art Around Town

Fri, May 6, 5-8 PM

The first Friday of every month year-round, downtown Portsmouth celebrates its inspired, intimate urban community in big city style by presenting its Art 'Round Town free gallery walk! Featuring fantastic art, new exhibitions, and refreshments at each participating gallery! Check the website for participating galleries.

<http://arroundtown.org/>

### Imagine That! The Power of Picture Books

May 6- September 25, Daily

10 AM- 5 PM

Portsmouth Historical Society has assembled a collection of extraordinary illustrations for children's picture books by a "who's who" of New England illustrators, from Maxfield Parrish and N.C. Wyeth, to Robert McCloskey (*Make Way for Ducklings*), Hans and Margret Rey (*Curious George*), and Dr. Seuss (aka Theodor Geisel); to contemporary artists Chris Van Dusen, Mo Willems, Tomie dePaola, and Ashley Bryan. <https://portsmouthhistory.org/>

# INSPIRATION.....

## Quote of the Month:

“What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, and more unashamed conversation.”

~ Glenn Close

## 10 MENTAL HEALTH EXERCISES YOU CAN DO ANYWHERE

@BELIEVEPHQ

- 1** Challenge unhelpful thoughts using a thought diary
- 2** Assess your emotions using a simple body scan technique and asking yourself "How am I feeling?"
- 3** Write down your thoughts and feelings in a diary
- 4** Write down 3 good things you have achieved today
- 5** Engage all your senses with an activity that you are doing
- 6** When you experience negative thoughts identify thinking errors
- 7** Use problem solving to help you find solutions to a problem
- 8** Practice some mindfulness and try to be present with what you are doing
- 9** Deep breathing is great for reducing physiological and psychological arousal
- 10** Progressive muscle relaxation can help to reduce stress and anxiety

# THE MONTHLY PUZZLE

Created with TheTeachersCorner.net Word Search Maker

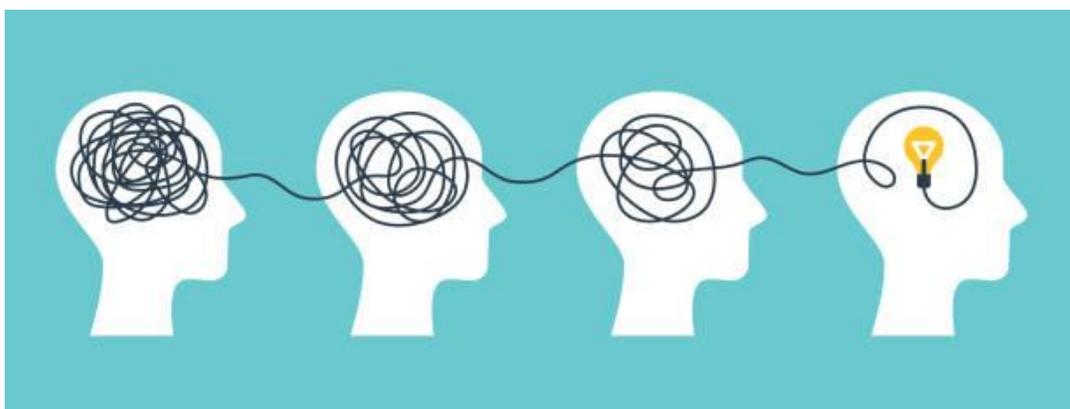
## Mental Health Awareness Month

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

WELLNESS  
INDEPENDENCE  
ANXIETY  
AWARENESS  
COMMUNITY

HOPE  
MUTUAL  
DEPRESSION  
STIGMA  
CONNECTION

ASSERTIVE  
HEALTH  
SELFCARE  
PEERS  
CALM





If you are struggling with your mental health, 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.**

- Groups Mon-Fri in our Portsmouth center or online
- One-on-one support for computer, budgeting, or job skills
- **Warmline telephone support, staffed by trained peers, available 5-10 PM seven days a week. Please call us at: 603-427-6966**
- **Step-Up Step-Down, our voluntary residential program, staffed 24/7 by peer specialists**

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**Connections Peer Support Center**

**544 Islington St.**

**Portsmouth, NH 03801**