

February 2022

Upcoming events

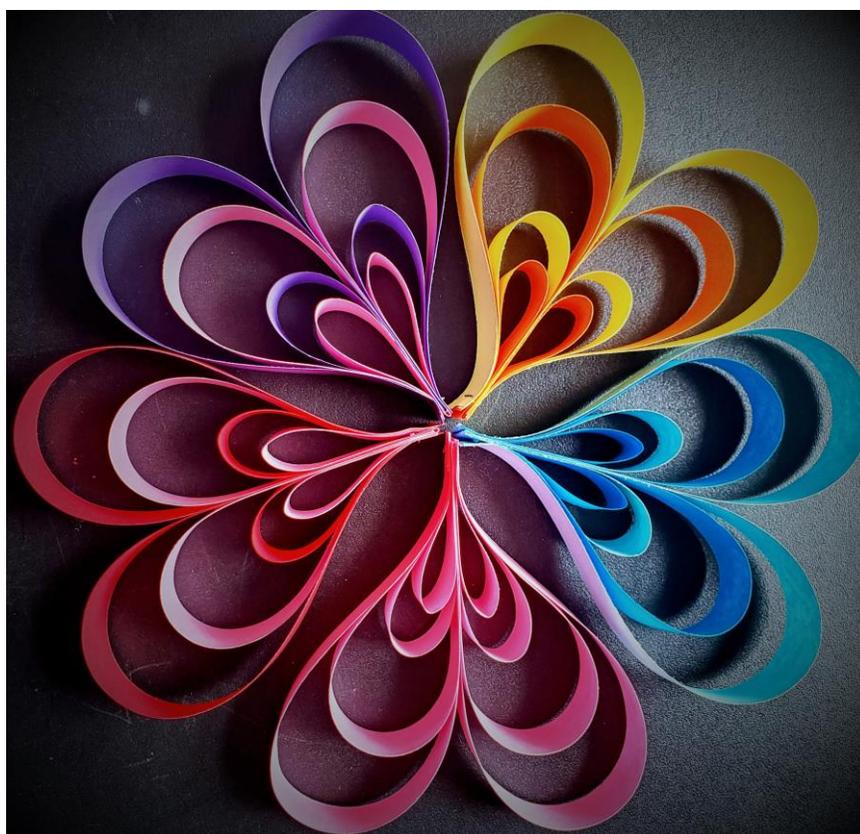
NH Mental Health Peer Alliance, Tue, Feb 15, 10 AM. Come, let your voice be heard. The Alliance is made up of adults with lived experience who want to improve mental health services in NH, organizing to advocate, educate, and inform. Please contact tina@connectionspeersupport.org for an invitation.

Board of Directors, Wed, Feb 23, 5 PM. Members and staff welcome and encouraged to attend. Please contact tina@connectionspeersupport.org for an invitation.

Community Meeting, Wed, Feb 2, 9:15 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!



Loving Ourselves: We are Worth it



Betsy was feeling the love

In this month's newsletter, we explore various ways Connections members are taking care of themselves, from contemplative activities, to Chrissie's thoughtful meditation on how her stay in our residential program, Step Up/Step Down, allowed her to move toward taking control of her own wellness. We, too, are looking at ways we can take steps to value ourselves and support our own well-being.

OUR VOICES

A Gift of Time and Space

by Chrissie Dix



I had an extremely rough time in the fall of 2021 which required multiple hospitalizations. My thoughts would spiral out of control. I was at a breaking point, with my anxiety high, intrusive thoughts, and fear of hurting myself. I would start to feel better as soon as I entered the hospital. I thought the hospital was there to help me; it was an escape from my house and I felt safe. Being in the hospital would ease a crisis, but it was like a holding spot. The staff was always busy. I would have ten minutes with a doctor or when a nurse brought meds. The groups never seemed to be what I needed. When I got out, I would go right back to where I was, and the cycle would start again.

I was looking to learn skills to calm my anxiety. I wanted to stay out of the hospital. During my last hospitalization I was told there was an opening at SUSD. I was accepted and went to stay at SUSD for a month.

While I was at SUSD I worked hard on the issues that led to all the hospitalizations. The staff at SUSD worked hard alongside me. I developed a WRAP toolbox full of things that I could use to calm myself, including yarn and crochet hooks, a small diamond painting and drawing paper. I also included a box of tickets with activities. I created a vision book in which, each week, I add affirmations and portray positive developments in pictures. I practiced skills to help me with my anxiety: deep breathing, meditation, developing relationships for support when I left.

The staff understood where I was coming from and there was time to develop real relationships.

The amazing thing about SUSD was the staff. Each was unique and special in their own way. The staff understood where I was coming from and there was time to develop real relationships. I woke up at 1 AM. An overnight staff member and I bonded over similar experiences, talked about our pasts and how we wanted to move into our future. Other staff would work with me on diamond paintings but the conversations were different. This uniqueness of the staff provided different views, and different types of support, which helped provide an amazing experience at SUSD. It helped me develop the tools to help break the cycle of hospitalizations and then transition home.

And I have been using these skills. For instance, one weekend my anxiety was high and my thoughts were racing and so chaotic that I wanted to go to the hospital just to get relief. But I paused. I pulled out my wellness toolbox and tried some things. It took several tries before something helped (about six things!) But it helped; that is, I was able to help myself. I was able to relax, lie down and go to sleep. And I haven't gone to the hospital.

STEP UP/STEP DOWN



Opened in September 2021, Connections Step Up/Step Down program is one of four operating in New Hampshire. We have been thrilled to bring the principles of Intentional Peer Support to a new level, offering a retreat where those wishing to work on their own mental health goals are able to do so with 24-hour staffing by trained peer specialists.

SUSD is free of charge to ALL NH residents, 18 and older, with no limits of insurance or income. It is a completely voluntary residential program where someone in a mental health crisis might step up from outpatient care into a supportive environment, or step down from a hospitalization before going back to their homes. This enables them to remain connected to friends, family, and community members as they focus on their wellness. All guests will be able to go to school or work, see their loved ones, and remain members of their community while avoiding the high cost of a hospital stay.

Find more information, including the application packet, on our website:

<https://www.connectionspeersupport.org/susd>

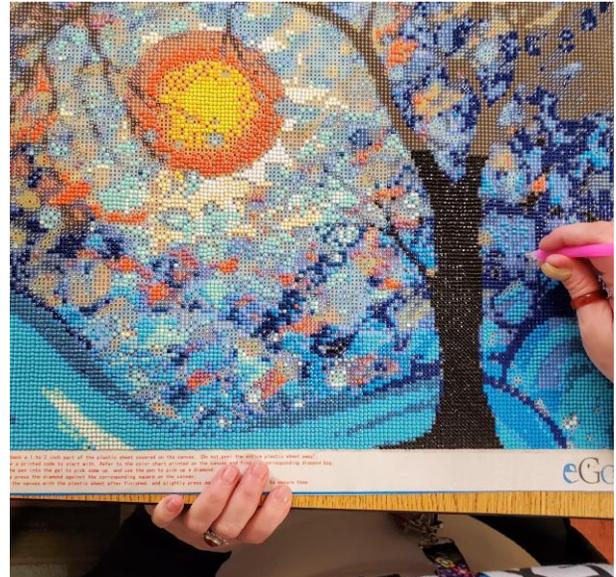


OUR VOICES

Diamond Painting Comes to Connections



Chrissie works on a present for a friend



Nicole's latest creation

A few months ago, something new started showing up at Connections: colorful canvases and trays of sparkling jewels. This was our introduction to America's latest crafts craze, diamond painting.

Sometimes described as paint-by-number for the 21st century, diamond painting consists of an image on canvas onto which one fixes tiny jewels to create a sparkling final product.

Members gave varying reasons for their devotion to their new-found pastime, but we kept hearing about how the rhythm of the work, repeatedly picking up and placing the jewels with a wand, was meditative and relaxing. Folks were also pleased with the resulting piece of art to admire on their wall.

And it has spread at Connections, with one member giving pointers to another, so that some days our main room sparkles with a thousand points of light.



Paula found a magnifying glass made diamond painting work for her

CENTER HAPPENINGS



Reading with Author Jordan Mayim (Rescheduled)

On Tuesday, February 22 at 10:15 AM, Connections is delighted to welcome author Jordana Chana Mayim for a book reading of her newest release: *If You Ever Lose Hope*. It's an illustrated story about how to regain hope after you've lost it. Jordana will also share with you how she made the illustrations and then reads the first few pages of her next book, *The Fate of the Dragon: An Illustrated Essay on the New Normal*. In Jordana's books, she shares all the light that healing from depression taught her how to see.



Speaking for Ourselves: Self-Advocacy

A vitally important part of caring for our selves is learning the skills of self-advocacy. This month Connections is offering two events that focus on this this critical piece.

First, on Thursday, February 10, at 10:15 AM, Connections Executive Director Mike Skinner will speak about his own journey through the mental health system as he learned to advocate for himself and others, even as he worked for his own wellness and healing.

Next, on Friday, February 25 at 10 AM, we welcome back a friend, Tom Grinley, director of the Office of Consumer and Family Affairs, Bureau of Behavioral Health, which provides education, information, and support to individuals and families of those who are dealing with the challenges of mental illness. Tom is a long-time passionate worker for self-advocacy among consumers of mental health services as he supports us in developing our own voice.

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

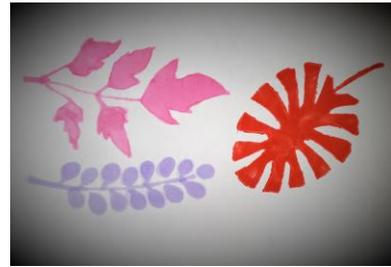
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
	9:15 AM Check-in 10:15 Vision Boards 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 IPS Topics	9:15 AM Community Meeting 10:15 Community Resources 11:30 Community Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 Using WRAP: What is Recovery to you?
9:15 AM Check-in 10:15 Addressing Trauma 11:00 Hearing Voices 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 Nutrition 2:15 Dual Recovery	9:15 AM Check-in 10:15 Healing thru Poetry 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 IPS Topics	9:15 AM Check-in 10:15 Community Resources 11:30 Community Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 Using WRAP: What is Recovery to you?
9:15 AM Check-in 10:15 Addressing Trauma 11:00 Hearing Voices 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 Nutrition 2:15 Dual Recovery	9:15 AM Check-in 10:15 NH Peer Alliance 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 IPS Topics	9:15 AM Check-in 10:15 Community Resources 11:30 Community Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 Using WRAP: What is Recovery to you?
CLOSED  	9:15 AM Check-in 10:15 Guest Speaker: Jordona Mayim 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 IPS Topics	9:15 AM Check-in 10:15 Community Resources 11:30 Community Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 Using WRAP: What is Recovery to you? 5 :00 Board of Directors Meeting
9:15 AM Check-in 10:15 Addressing Trauma 11:00 Hearing Voices 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 Nutrition 2:15 Dual Recovery	<p>Do you need support with budgeting, computer, or job skills? We got you! Give us a call to set up a time for one-on-one support.</p>	

February 2022 Schedule

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

Connectionspeersupport.org

Or call 603 427 6966



Beth was imagining spring

Thursday	Friday	
9:15 AM Check-in 3 10:15 Coping with COVID 11:30 Community Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 Gentle Stretching and Exercise	9:15 AM Check-in 4 10:15 Depression Management 11 Visit Gather/Hannaford 12:00 CLOSED FOR STAFF TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All services free of charge • No referral needed • We offer transportation • Groups available in person or online • In case of bad weather, the center may close but groups still run online • Masks required in center and
9:15 AM Check-in 10 10:15 Guest Speaker: Mike Skinner My Journey of Healing and-Advocacy 11:30 Community Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 Gentle Stretching and Exercise	9:15 AM Check-in 11 10:15 Depression Management 11 Visit Gather/Hannaford 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 Weekend Self-care Plan	
9:15 AM Check-in 17 10:15 Excursion: Peter's People Photography Exhibit 11:30 Community Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 Gentle Stretching and Exercise	9:15 AM Check-in 18 10:15 Depression Management 11 Visit Gather/Hannaford 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 Weekend Self-care Plan	
9:15 AM Check-in 24 10:15 Coping with COVID 11:30 Community Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 Gentle Stretching and Exercise	9:15 AM Check-in 25 10:00 Guest Speaker: Tom Grinley on Self Advocacy 11:30 BYO Lunch/Check-in/Neighborhood Walk 1:15 Weekend Self-care Plan	

Warmline

When you just want to talk to someone.

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.

603 427 6966



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:

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 800-639-5290

Legal Advice & Referral Center

800-639-5290

Disability Rights Center:

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 Noon-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/

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

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

FREE ONLINE COMMUNITY EVENTS

Please note, that while all events are free, you may need to pre-register; just follow the links or call!

Trauma-Informed Mindfulness Meditation

Feb 1 and 15, 3 PM

Tue,

Learn how to

mindfully navigate through PTSD triggers and how to soothe your nervous system once they're triggered.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/trauma-informed-mindfulness-meditation-registration-170026195929?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

Speak the Word: Online Poetry and Spoken Word Writing Workshop

Sat, Feb 5 and 19, 1 PM

We're a friendly, inclusive and encouraging group. Whoever you are and whatever your relationship with poetry, we'd love you to join us. Poet PJ Samuels opens the session with a wellbeing check-in and freewrite, and Poet nudi brings poems, artwork and prompts for inspiration. There's no pressure to share what you write, so feel free to just come along and see how you like it! https://www.eventbrite.com/e/speak-the-word-online-poetry-and-spoken-word-writing-workshop-tickets-149889161517?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch&keep_tld=1

Disability (is not a bad word)

Tue, Feb 15, 6:30 PM

Disability (Is Not a Bad Word) is a safe peer-led space to build support and friendship. This group is for folks who are disabled (self-defined), chronically ill, those who experience chronic pain, have mobility impairments, and anyone who is navigating living outside of the spectrum of neurotypical and/or able-bodied norms. We honor that every individual is their own expert and every individual has the right to make their own choices including how they explain, understand, address, and describe their lived experience, mental/physical health, and identities.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/disability-is-not-a-bad-word-tickets-115086035430?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

Bee Time: Lessons from the Hive with Mark L. Winston

Thur, Feb 3, 2 PM

"There are powerful lessons to be learned from bees about how we humans can better understand our place in nature, engage the people and events surrounding us with greater focus and clarity, interact more effectively in our relationships and communities, and open ourselves to a deeper understanding of who we are as individuals, communities and a species. I'll talk about my experiences over 40 years of walking into apiaries, and the lessons learned from a life spent among the bees." One of the world's leading experts on bees and pollination, Dr. Winston is also an internationally recognized researcher, teacher and writer. https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bee-time-lessons-from-the-hive-with-mark-l-winston-tickets-230245810417?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch&keep_tld=1

What's on my Mind?

Sat, Feb 26, 1 PM

Join Dr. Patricia Isis, author of The Mindful Doodle Book, for a 2-hour experiential mindful doodle workshop. Participants will learn how to use mindful doodling for self-care and clinical work with clients. Additionally, participants will learn about mindful self-compassion and will be invited to join her research if they wish to do so.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/whats-on-my-mind-a-mindfulness-based-art-therapy-workshop-tickets-234976861117?aff=ebdssbonlinesearchnresearch>

INSPIRATION.....

Thoughts to share from Mike:

"In the thick of this work we often forget about our own needs..." - Shery Mead

Self-care means giving yourself permission to pause." - Cecilia Tran

"It's all about falling in love with yourself and sharing that love with someone who appreciates you, rather than looking for love to compensate for a self-love deficit." - Eartha Kitt



THE MONTHLY PUZZLE

Created with TheTeachersCorner.net Word Search Maker

Taking Care of Ourselves

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

TALK TO A FRIEND	WALK	CRAFT
SLEEP	COME TO CONNECTIONS	MEDITATE
JOURNAL	WRITE POETRY	CALL THE WARMLINE
SET BOUNDARIES	YOGA	GET OUT IN NATURE
PETS	EXERCISE	ASK FOR HELP



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