

UNITED COUNSELING SERVICE



BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY



Contact UCS

Winter 2017



## Message from the Executive Director



Happy New Year!

As we begin a new year I look forward to what it will bring. 2016 was a year of change at United Counseling Service. I am excited to be part of United Counseling Service and am deeply committed to the agency, its clients and its staff.

With nearly 300 employees operating in 16 different facilities throughout Bennington County, we provide support and guidance to help individuals and families improve their quality of life. We provide outpatient counseling and substance abuse services, emergency mental health services, extensive rehabilitation services, home and school-based services, employment services for people with mental illness or with developmental disabilities and a nationally recognized Head Start program.

We are here for you and will continue to provide resources and programs that will benefit the community as a whole.

*Lorna W. Mattern*  
Executive Director



## Universal Access available to callers who need help.

Far too many people in crisis wind up in the

wrong place with inadequate care. To help individuals find the help they need, United Counseling Service created the Universal Access Program. UCS Intake Coordinators assess incoming calls and connect individuals to UCS Programs or other agencies if needed. Priority populations are immediately scheduled for an appointment or referred to the emergency services.



The goal of our Universal Access Program includes providing immediate help to individuals in crisis, decreasing wait time for appointments and getting people to the right place for help.

The Universal Access Program is the first contact most individuals have with United Counseling Service and as a result of Universal Access, UCS no longer has a waiting list for our services.

**The Universal Access team is available Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm and Tuesdays until 7pm at (802) 442-5491.**



## Youth Mental Health First Aid Training Available



### Early Intervention is Key for Mental Health

According to the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#), one in five young people ages 13-18 have, or will have, a serious mental illness in their life, and half of all lifetime cases of mental illness start by age 14. Unaddressed mental health concerns in young people can affect every aspect of their lives—from relationships to performance in school. United Counseling Service now offers a Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training.

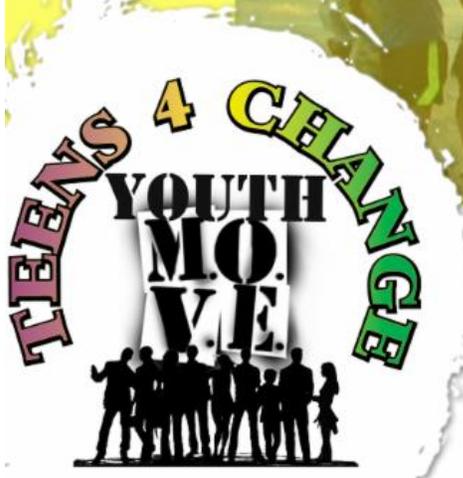
Youth Mental Health First Aid is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people. The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis

situations. Programs like [Youth Mental Health First Aid](#) equip teachers, parents and caregivers with the skills they need to identify and reach out to a young person who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use problem. Participants learn to support a youth developing signs and symptoms of a mental illness or in an emotional crisis.

If you are interested in scheduling a Youth Mental Health First Aid training for a group or organization contact Amie Niles at [aniles@ucsvt.org](mailto:aniles@ucsvt.org). This training has been generously underwritten and is offered at no cost to the participants.



Visit [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com) and search "Youth Summit of Bennington" to Register

**Third Annual Youth Summit of Bennington**  
**HEALTHY STATE OF MIND**  
 February 23, 2017 9am - 3pm  
 MAUHS 301 Park Street  
<https://www.facebook.com/Teens4ChangeVT/>

Teens for Change will be holding their 3rd Annual Youth Summit.

The theme of the Summit, 'Healthy State of Mind', provides a focus for teens to explore what mental wellness, community wellness and substance abuse prevention may mean to individuals and the Bennington community as a whole.

Contact [Katrina Hollis](#) or [Ally Glasser-Brown](#) for more information or call 802.442.5491.



## Youth and Family Services to hold Seven Challenges Group

[Seven Challenges](#) is a program designed for adolescents and young adults abusing and/or dependent on drugs. The program focuses on developing positive decision making and supporting the use of positive coping skills. We know that alcohol and drug use is often a way to cope with life at home, at school and in social groups. Seven Challenges explores the reasons that lay underneath the use behaviors with a strong focus on developing non-substance dependent positive coping skills. Time is spent on the dangers of drug use and while we will always support abstaining from use, we are very aware that teens will stop for a short period of time and return to use once the pressure to abstain is lessened. With this knowledge in mind [Seven Challenges](#) works with youth at all stages of change.



Our Youth and Family Services Division has begun accepting referrals for our Seven Challenges group that will be starting **Monday, February 27th, 2017** at Burgess House from 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm with some transportation options available.

Parents/Guardians will be invited to participate in a one-time educational session during the first youth meeting on February 27th.

For more information on our program call 802.442.5491.



[Bowl For Kids' Sake](#) is the major fundraiser for Big Brothers Big Sisters. We match children with caring adult mentors. By providing guidance and direction, volunteers help the children realize their self-worth and potential as an adult. Higher grades, lower chances of substance abuse, and an increase in self-esteem are just some of the rewards in this meaningful program. All money raised from this event will stay in the local area to help maintain current matches, and to build new ones.



[Yes, I would like to be a Bowl For Kids' Sake Sponsor](#)

[Yes, I would like to set up a Bowl For Kids' Sake Team](#)

For more information or if you have any question please contact Samantha Kenyon at 802.442.5491 or email [skenyon@ucsvt.org](mailto:skenyon@ucsvt.org)



Mark your Calendars

January 23, 2017 United Counseling Service hosts Legislative Breakfast

January 23-29, 2017 National Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week

February 23, 2017 Teens for Change to host 3rd Annual Youth Summit

April 1, 2017 Big Brothers Big Sisters 30th Annual Bowl for Kids' Sake

For more information visit [www.ucsvt.org](http://www.ucsvt.org) or call us at 802.442.5491.

United Counseling Service provides Bennington County with nationally recognized community-based mental health and human social services for children, adults, families, and seniors with the mission of "Building a stronger community by empowering individuals and families to live healthy and meaningful lives." Visit [www.ucsvt.org](http://www.ucsvt.org) to find out more.

Are you interested in a career with a great organization?  
Check out current openings  
with United Counseling Service at [UCS Careers](#).

Donate Now

Visit our website