We are all in this together. We will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and will follow guidance from public health officials and government agencies, so we can continue to support our community.

A little music is good for the soul!

We were so lucky to have the ME2/Orchestra play for United Counseling Service's 60th Anniversary Celebration in 2018. ME2/Orchestra is the world's only classical music organization created for individuals with mental illnesses and the people who support them. ME2/Orchestra serves as a model organization where people with and without mental illnesses work together in an environment where acceptance is expectation, patience is encouraged, and supporting each other is a priority.

We are excited to share with you "Nimrod" from Elgar's Enigma Variation from their performance in February. They are practicing via zoom and perhaps they will be able to come and play in Southern Vermont in the near future.

Watch/Listen to ME2 Orchestra perform Nimrod

Family Emergency Services has expanded its hours

As a result of the Coronavirus crisis, United Counseling Service has expanded the hours of its Family Emergency Services. Family Emergency Services (FES) is a service open to any family and/or youth in
crisis who reside in Bennington County. These services can include de-escalation, parenting support, suicide or homicide screening, and other mental health and behavioral supports. During COVID-19, we expanded our hours and now are available 7 days a week, 8am-8pm to provide these services. We also have increased the number of staff working at any given time, with regular review to ensure appropriate staffing moving forward. In being mindful of social distancing, we are using telehealth to communicate with families employing platforms such as zoom or telephone calls.

Overnight, there are still crisis services available for families who may need them, with Family Emergency Services following up the next day. All crisis services can be accessed by calling (802) 442-1700 and giving the on-call provider basic information so that staff can return the call.

In this everchanging time, we continue to look at how we can support our community. Please share this information, along with the attached flyer, with your families and if you have any questions please contact Keili Trottier at ktrottier@ucsvt.org
Community Mental Health - Our doors our open

Stressed? Overwhelmed? Hopeless? You are not alone. Life has changed dramatically in the past few weeks, but Vermont’s designated and specialized service agencies are still here to help. Our agencies are now meeting the mental health, substance use disorder and developmental services needs of Vermonters via video and phone. Our virtual doors are open. Clinical assessment, individual therapy, and 24/7 mental health crisis response — among other services — are all just a phone call away and are generally covered by your insurance, Medicaid or other public funding.

For many Vermonters, the combination of social isolation, fear, loss, financial stress, and uncertainty for the future can tax our ability to cope. In particular, parenting and care giving on a 24/7 basis can raise the temperature at home. Feelings of increased anxiety, desperation or depression can take over. Although picking up the phone to seek support may feel uncomfortable for some, we are all in this together and need to support each other through this crisis. Reaching out for support is a healthy response to the stress we are all experiencing and can help you to better support the people you love and care about. Our mental health clinicians are here to provide Vermonters with the support needed to get through this difficult time.

“The ability to use video technology that protects people’s privacy has been a game changer for us during the Coronavirus crisis,” said Mary Moulton, Executive Director of Washington County Mental Health Services. “Our clinicians can support people remotely with the same high-quality therapeutic care that we were providing before the crisis in offices and through home visits, to keep everyone safe and healthy.” Governor Phil Scott has designated mental health, substance use disorder, and development disabilities services staff as essential workers. In addition to the clinical services we offer, our residential staff, therapeutic school staff, shared living providers, and foster parents are working selflessly and tirelessly to support Vermonters in our various programs.

You can find your local agency, or learn more about how to access services here. Intake phone numbers and crisis lines are one click away here. More information about Vermont Care Partners and our network of sixteen agencies specializing in mental health, substance used disorder, and developmental disability services and supports in every community in Vermont is available at vermontcarepartners.org.

Head Start/Early Head Start

2 Park Street
North Bennington, VT 05257
Phone: 802-442-3686
Locations in Bennington, North Bennington, Manchester and Pownal

UCS/ECS joins the 2020 Census Activities

Statistics in Schools and Dr Seuss activities warmed the hearts of many children served by Head Start and Early Head Start in Bennington County. Assistant Director Rebecca Bishop distributed the many resources found on the partnership and SIS pages of the website 2020Censusforschools to all the area teachers. Let's Count Me Let's Count You by Thing One and Thing Two coloring pages were filled with swirling green, purple, pink and blue crayons. Find yours on www.seussville.com.

Parents received SIS and Counting young children informational flyers several weeks in a row to encourage a complete count for Vermont. Bishop rallied several of community partners including area businesses and organizations to join in the Self Response awareness efforts for Vermont.

These efforts have Bennington County on the upswing of Self Response. Find your town on the National Response Rate Map: www.2020Census.gov/en/response-rate.html.
Bennington County challenges you to do more for your community and its future by self responding today!

Complete 2020 US Census now.

We are supporting our families with a little story time.

“There are many little ways to enlarge your world. Love of books is the best of all.”

Jacqueline Kennedy

Teachers and staff from our Head Start and Early Head Start programs are reading to their students. Check out some more stories!

Splish, Splash, Splosh

The Cat In The Hat “Oh, the THINGS You Can DO that are GOOD for you!

Go Away Big Green Monster

Oh A-Hunting We Will Go

Read the Head Start / ECS April 2020 Newsletter

Food Resources available in Bennington County

BENNINGTON COUNTY FOOD RESOURCES
IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Unless otherwise noted, food pickup is outside maintaining a physical distance of 6 feet

Southwest VT Supervisory Union - breakfast and lunch available for all students under 18 via school bus delivery or in person at MAUMS. Visit “Meals for Students” at www.svsu.org under the Covid response tab for routes and delivery times.

BENNINGTON:
Kitchen Cupboard (GBICS) - 121 Depot Street; 802-447-3700
Every Tuesday 5:30-7:30 PM
Every Thursday 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
Every Saturday 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

VeggieVanGo (VT Foodbank) – Drive-through; follow parking attendant.
First Wednesday 8:30-10:00 AM Mount Anthony Union High School
Third Wednesday 8:30-10:00 AM TBA
Fourth Wednesday 12:30-2:00 PM TBA

HIS Pantry (Sacred Heart Saint Francis de Sales) - 238 Main Street; 802-442-3141
Every Wednesday 1:00 PM-3:30 PM
Every Friday 10:00 AM-11:30 AM
Shires Housing/SASH First Wednesday 11:30 AM
Brookside Apartments
Second Wednesday 12-2 & 5-7 PM
Applegate Apartments
Third Wednesday 11:30 AM
Walloomsac Apartments

Bible Baptist Church, Harwood Hill; 802-447-3618. Call for an appointment

Green Mountain Christian Center – 440 Main Street (back parking lot); 447-7224
First Friday 4:00-6:00 PM
Third Friday 4:00-6:00 PM

Hot meals to go
Second Congregational Church, Hillside Street - Sunday 5:00 PM
Harvest House Soup Kitchen, River Street
Mon-Fri 8:00-10:00AM and 11:15AM-1:00PM, Sat 8:00-9:30AM, Sun 8:00-10:00AM Meals on Wheels (café closed). Call 802-442-8012 for eligibility.

BROC Food Shelf is presently closed
NORTH BENNINGTON:
St. John the Baptist Church, Houghton Street
Serving North Bennington and Shaftsbury residents
Second Friday 11:00 AM-12:00 PM
Tuesday after second Friday 3:00 PM-4:00 PM

North Bennington Baptist Church –Church Street; 802-442-7251
Last Thursday 1:00-2:00 PM (Call if needed outside these hours)

Capstone Baptist Church - 1034 Water Street; 603 504 4955 - Pick-up OR delivery of cold lunch and/or hot supper. Call by 10:00 AM for lunch; 4:00 PM for supper. Serving Bennington County and bordering NY towns (Hoosick Falls, White Creek, Cambridge)

SHAFTSBURY:
The Carpenter’s Shop (Shaftsbury United Methodist), 127 Church Street; 802-442-5893

ARLINGTON:
Arlington and Sunderland Meal Delivery for Students– Contact Kathy Clark, Federated Church of East Arlington and Summer Meal Programs, ksclark58@yahoo.com

Arlington Food Shelf, 165 Old Mill Road; 802-375-6328
Serving Arlington, Sunderland and Sandgate residents
First Tuesday 1:30-4:00 PM
Third Tuesday 3:30-5:00 PM

MANCHESTER:
Burr & Burton Academy Meal Delivery for Students- Contact Sarah McMillion smcmillan@burrburton.org or Billy Canfield bcanfield@burrburton.org

Manchester Community Food Cupboard (Town Offices), 6039 Main Street; 802-362-0057
Every Wednesday 2:00-4:00 PM
Every Thursday 10:00-2:00 AND 2:00-4:00 PM
Last Saturday 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Shires Housing/SASH
Second Wednesday 10:30 AM - Meadows Apartments (behind Shaws); Seniors only

Additional Resources
https://sites.google.com/view/benningtonfoodconnections/home
* Updated regularly – contact andrea.malinowski@svhealthcare.org / 802.379.5468
with additions, questions and/or edits
Updated 04.06.20
Additional Resources for COVID-19 Information

Vermont Department of Health
Center for Disease Control
Southern Vermont Medical Center
Managing Anxiety and Stress -CDC

Additional Resources

Guide to museums, e-learnings and on-line collections

Share your stories.

Now more than ever, is a time when we could all use a little something that feels good. Like a good story. An act that goes beyond in the service of others, caring for our neighbors, family and friends…our community. We’d love to hear about it. Share your story…any story that represents how, as a community and individuals, we bring hope and support together….Email your stories and photos to Heidi French at hfrench@ucsvt.org.

UCS is a great place to work.

Our employees are creative, thoughtful, energetic, forward thinking and empowered. UCS is living its mission: Building a stronger community by empowering individuals to live healthy and meaningful lives. If you want to make a difference and help those who need it most, consider joining our team. UCS is a great place to work and a great place to get care. Check out all current openings here. UCS JOB OPENINGS

Please be advised that the Coronavirus Virus/COVID-19 has altered the way we are currently recruiting at this time. Should you be contacted for consideration, we are limiting job interviews to telephone or video communication, in order to align with guidance by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Hiring for certain positions may also be slowed by efforts being used to promote social distancing and other recommended strategies. We thank you for your understanding as we navigate the best way to keep you, employees, and our community safe.

All upcoming agency events and trainings through the end of April have been cancelled.

United Counseling Service - 100 Ledge Hill Drive - PO Box 588 - Bennington, VT 05201
(802) 442-5491 - ucsvt.org