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.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Since 1949, the month of May has been designated National Mental Health Awareness Month. The goal of Mental Health Awareness Month is only to raise awareness, but to reduce the stigma that often surrounds mental illness, and to send the message to everyone that attaining mental wellness is possible. Across the country, millions of people contend with mental or behavioral health matters. One in four adults in America will experience a mental-health issue at least once in their life—that represents about 65% of the total U.S. population.

Mental health awareness has been steadily growing around the world, but it is still largely below what it should and could be. Often, getting treatment for a mental illness makes people feel embarrassed, and they don't want others to know about it. Yet, like physical health, mental health is important at every stage of life: it affects how we think, feel and act. Our mental state also determines how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices—so it's not surprising that mental health and physical health are closely connected. Mental illnesses can reduce a person's ability to participate in health-promoting behaviors, just as problems with physical health can have a serious impact on mental health and decrease a person's ability to participate in treatment and recovery.

It makes sense that, just like physical health, mental health needs to be taken care of and maintained.
Expanding awareness of what contributes to mental health and reducing the stigma surrounding getting help increase the chances for early intervention, which can decrease the severity of the illness, and result in a faster recovery.

Katie Aiken is the Clinical Intake Coordinator for UCS Youth and Family Services and is a Certified Mental Health First Aid Trainer.

UCS joins fellow Vermont Care Partners Agencies in reshaping mental health care during COVID-19 emergency

In the midst of a public health emergency, Vermont's Designated and Specialized Service Agencies (DA/SSAs) inspire us now more than ever. While navigating new state and federal policies, providers are still offering resources to local communities, providing treatment with clients using technologies, collaborating with partners, and going above and beyond every day to get Vermonters the supports they need to stay well during Covid-19 emergency. Join us in recognizing our valuable Vermont health care providers and how they are reshaping the ways Vermonters stay well.

Bowlathon canceled but Mentoring at UCS is still making a difference

After much consideration, and for the first time in its 33-year history, United Counseling Service had to make the difficult but necessary decision to cancel the Mentoring at UCS Bowlathon for 2020, due to public health considerations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The decision was especially hard because this beloved event is the primary fundraiser for our mentoring program.

Mentoring has been proven to have a positive impact and promote positive social attitudes and relationships for both the children and teens served and the mentors themselves. Mentoring at UCS serves youth throughout Bennington County and depends on support from the community to be able to provide this valuable, and valued, benefit.

“It was with heavy heart that we cancelled this community-wide event for 2020,” said Lorna Mattern, Executive Director of UCS. “We realize this is a difficult time for everyone and our mentoring program’s staff have been busy finding ways to continue to provide support and resources to our mentors and mentees.”

To learn more about our program, contact Mentoring at UCS Program Coordinator Laurie Sallisky at lsallisky@ucsvt.org.

Photo: Mentoring at UCS Bowlathon 2019
# Articles of Interest

*This Forbes Article* on "deaths of despair" related to the COVID-19 pandemic also offers some advice on how to prevent some of the mental health fallout.

*The VT Department of Mental Health's current e-flyer* about mental health awareness also contains links to additional resources.
Head Start and Early Head Start celebrated Teacher Appreciation Week.

Please join UCS in recognizing all of our teachers for the wonderful work they are doing. They have been endlessly creative and flexible, rising to the challenge of finding new ways to engage and communicate with our families in a challenging time.

Thank You!
BENNINGTON COUNTY FOOD RESOURCES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The Bennington Banner has lifted the paywall on all coronavirus stories that provide critical public health information to readers.

See the full list

Additional resources for COVID-19 information

Vermont Department of Health
Center for Disease Control
Southern Vermont Medical Center
Managing Anxiety and Stress -CDC
Map of Community Resources in Bennington
Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) COVID 19 Resource Page

As a part of the federal Coronavirus Relief Bill, 3SquaresVT households who don't already receive the maximum benefit will see an increase in benefits in April and May. To learn more & find out if you qualify for 3SquaresVT visit Hunger Free Vermont.

Be counted in the 2020 Census

Census data is used to allocate billions of dollars in funding for hospitals, school lunch programs, Medicaid and resources that are needed every year, especially in uncertain times like now.

Make sure everyone in your home is counted.

Complete the 2020 Census now

Please consider supporting UCS

Now more than ever support from our donors is vital in ensuring that...
we continue to meet the growing needs of our community. Please consider making a donation. Your donation makes a difference and with your help we can build a stronger community.

Donations can be mailed to:
United Counseling Service
PO Box 588
Bennington, VT 05201

DONATE NOW

Artwork created by UCS Community Support Client.

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.

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU. 24/7.

Are you feeling stressed or anxious due to COVID-19 and need to talk? Contact United Counseling Service at 802.442.5491.

In addition to our other services, we currently have a Warm Line available to anyone living in Bennington County available Monday through Friday 8am to 5pm. Visit ucsvt.org for more information.