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.

UCS - Helping to reduce opioid overdoses

The Department of Health Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs launched the Harm Reduction Packs pilot project to reduce opioid overdose risk by providing education, naloxone and self-care products. The kits are provided to Vermonters at the highest risk and are available at United Counseling Service at no cost.

What are the goals of the project?
The goals of the program are reducing the risk of overdose from opioids, generating greater awareness about treatment and recovery options, and increasing treatment engagement.

How are the Harm Reduction Packs provided to Vermonters?
In order to reach high risk populations, there are 22 sites around Vermont that distribute the Harm Reduction Packs, including the AIDS Project of Southern Vermont, Vermont Cares, hospitals, police departments, probation and parole offices, and Syringe Service Program sites. In partnership with the Health Department Division of Emergency Preparedness, Response and Injury Prevention there is a plan to send 800 Harm Reduction Packs to 200 Emergency Medical Service (EMS) sites for distribution during emergency calls.

What is in a Harm Reduction Pack?
Harm Reduction Packs include:
- 1 dose of Narcan with instructions
- Treatment and Recovery brochure
- HIV & Injecting Drugs 101 flyer
- VT 211 Rack Card
- Sterile Gloves
- Sanitizing Wipe
- Lip Balm
- Hepatitis C & Injection Drug Use flyer
- Syringe Services Program information card

For more information visit Vermont Department of Health Harm Reduction
Lessons Learned from COVID-19

I vividly remember the day back in March when the governor closed non-essential services in Vermont. I remember immediately learning that I had to shut down the majority of our programs serving people with Developmental Disabilities, and I recall going office to office and telling staff that they had to pack up and start working from home. People were confused, scared, and unsure. At the time, none of us really understood what was being asked of us—but I think we all knew that the world would never look exactly the same again.

Now, here we are, almost four months to the day when I told people to pack up and go home. We’re still uncertain and most of us still don’t know what will be asked of us. But there is one thing I know for sure, and that is that we’ve learned a lot about ourselves and our strength in the last four months. As I reflect back on this difficult time, I’d like to share some of the lessons I have learned. Maybe some of you have learned similar things or maybe you are coming from a completely different place. Either way, we all have something we will take away from this pandemic.

COVID-19 Takeaways:

- I am stronger than I thought I was.
- My Developmental Services Team at UCS is more amazing and resilient than I ever gave them credit for.
- I will never take toilet paper for granted again.
- I am proud to work in a state that took all of this very seriously to keep us all safe.
- People with disabilities are the strongest people I know.
- Caregivers of people with disabilities are the best people I know.
- An empty office building does not feel like home. An environment filled with laughter, smiles and even complaining feels like home (still – let’s keep the complaining to a minimum, people!)
- I will never again take being able to go out to eat for granted.
- Shopping therapy is real. Online shopping is a wonderful thing.
- UCS cares. They care a lot!!
- Bringing cookies into the office when only three people are there means more cookies for you. It’s a simple matter of math.
- People’s true colors come out when they are under heavy stress. Some of these colors are dark, some are vibrant – depends on the person (and possibly how many cookies they got).
- Everyone reacts to a pandemic differently. Some people work harder than ever and become tougher and more dedicated. Some hoard paper towels.
- A smile seen through a mask is still a smile and it’s one you put there.
- Not everyone follows the one-way arrows in the grocery store.
- It’s hard not to hug.
- I am in awe and admiration of parents who had to homeschool their children while running a household and working.
- Zoom. Enough said.

They say when you do something you love, you never work a day in your life. I typically find this to be
true. However, when you do something you love during a global pandemic unlike the world has ever seen, it's exhausting, frustrating, different, and downright stressful. But, when you do something you love during a global pandemic, you get to more clearly see all of the good in people. You see how much they care and how they truly desire to help others. People’s dedication, compassion, and empathy comes shining through the clouds. You get to see the inner strength of people that you never saw in them before; and hopefully, if you’re doing it right, they will see yours too. It’s okay if they have to look past all the cookie crumbs and the mask to find it.

Dawn Danner is the Director of Developmental Services at United Counseling Service.

Our Kids Are More Stressed Than Ever—What Can We Do About It?
Wednesday, August 5 at 6pm

Now more than ever, it is important to support our youth both physically and mentally. United Counseling Service (UCS) will host a special webinar, Our Kids Are More Stressed Than Ever – What Can We Do About It? on Wednesday, August 5 at 6pm.

Parents, caregivers, and all who interact regularly with young people are invited to join UCS Youth and Family Service Clinician Kathleen Baroody, as she discusses signs and symptoms to look for that may indicate a child is feeling stressed. Attendees will learn helpful interventions and tools that can be used by non-professionals. This event is free; however, registration is required in order to obtain a link.

Our Kids Are More Stressed Than Ever is the third in a series of webinars United Counseling Service (UCS) has presented this year, with more planned for the coming months.

Register at Our Kids Are Stressed

Registration Now Open!
Registration is now open for the United Counseling Service (UCS) Virtual Superhero 5K and Kids’ Dash. The reimagined event, originally scheduled to take place on Saturday, November 7, will now be able to be completed any time over the weekend. Participants are encouraged to submit a photo of their treadmill or screenshot from their tracking device that shows their distance and pace, as well as a photo of themselves at a “finish line” in their superhero costume. There will also be a Virtual Kids’ Dash for kids to participate in. “What does a Virtual Kids’ Dash look like? Run as fast as you can in your favorite superhero costume and send us a photo! A prize will be awarded for best kid costume,” says Heidi French, Director of Community Relations.

Anyone who registers by September 1 will have the opportunity to join Andrea Malinowski for a FREE ten-week 5K training program, which kicks off September 2. The remote program will be delivered via Facebook Live and will include weekly updates with training and wellness tips, all included as part of the registration fee.

Registration is $35 for adults, $20 for students and UCS staff, $10 for UCS clients—FREE for the first 100 UCS clients and for all kids under 12. Race packets will be mailed to participants with official race bibs and a UCS Superhero buff (multi-use headband/face covering). Students under the age of 12 who register will receive a virtual toolkit with a training log. Visit ucsvt.org to register for the event.

### Practicing Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a type of meditation in which you focus on being intensely aware of what you’re sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment. Bob Wubbenhorst, Clinical Manager of UCS, presented a webinar on practicing mindfulness, including breathing methods, guided imagery, and other practices to relax the body and mind and help reduce stress.

Watch Practicing Mindfulness.

### Head Start/Early Head Start

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

Our very own Tammy Gosley received Let's Grow Kids' first ever annual Scholarship for Aspiring Early Educators

Congratulations to Tammy Gosley from our Bennington County Head Start-Early Head Start. She was awarded Let's Grow Kids first annual Scholarship for Aspiring Early Educators. The scholarship program was created to increase access to education and training for those looking to begin or advance careers in the field of early childhood education...Read Article
Tammy, of Bennington, has been working for Bennington County Head Start for 20 years after initially bringing her own children to the program. Tammy earned her associate’s degree while working full-time and is now enrolled at Northern Vermont University pursuing a bachelor’s degree.

"The unique path I’ve been on has given me the knowledge of the importance of education and the need for our field to be taken seriously."

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING MENTORING AT UCS

We were not able to hold our annual Bowlathon this year, but our supporters still had a positive impact on the success of our program.

The Bank of Bennington

Above All Vermont · B.P.O. Elks 567 · Bayside Resort · Bennington Banner · Bennington Bookstore · Bennington Car Wash/Bennington Express Lube · Bennington Lanes · Bennington Potters · Bringing You Vermont · Bromley Adventure Zone · C.L. White, Inc. · Charlie's Coffee House · Clark Art Institute · Fringe's Hair Salon · Genoa Healthcare LLC · Gifted Nails · Hannaford · Hayden Plumbing and Heating Inc. · Hound Dogs · John Cave · Katie Cleaver · Metalsmith · KFC/Taco Bell of Bennington · Knapps Music, Toys and Hobbies · Label Shopper · Long Ago & Far Away · Manchester View Fine Lodging · Mary A. Morrissey · Mass Moca · McClintock Law Office PC · McDonald's of Bennington · Merck Forest & Farmland Center · Monument Electric · Mulligan's · Otter Creek Fun Center · Outdoor Secrets Unwrapped Hot Sauce · Price Chopper's Golub Foundation · Quadra Tek · r.k. Miles, Inc. · Redeemed Repair · Revolution Fitness · Saratoga Performing Arts Center · Sarah's House · Shumway Insurance · Smith Hall · Sorel · Town iphone · TSC · The Post · Theys · Topper's Cabinets · United Way of Bennington County · WAMC · Women of the Moose · Yellow Pages of the Adirondacks
We are looking for some special people. Could you be the right fit?
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 at **UCS JOB OPENINGS**

Please be advised that the Coronavirus/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.

"My entire perspective on life and what my career could be, changed when I began working at UCS. The experience of working at the agency has been extremely empowering. I have never felt more valued, cared for and respected at any other place of employment. I have gained essential skills and have experienced countless learning opportunities that have aided me in all areas of life and will certainly help me succeed in the human services field."

-Justine Booth, Shared Living Program Manager

For more information about our career opportunities visit ucsvt.org/careers.
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, many 3SquaresVT households have seen some changes to and expansion of benefits. To learn more & find out if you qualify for 3SquaresVT visit Hunger Free Vermont.

Articles of Interest

Helping Children and Adolescents Cope With Disasters and Other Traumatic Events
In this publication, the National Institute of Mental Health defines and describes trauma, including trauma linked to disasters, and identifies ways in which children and adolescents may react to trauma. It also offers ways that parents and caregivers, rescue workers, and community members can help children and adolescents in recovering from trauma. This page is available as a PDF download and in Spanish.

You can't help others without taking care of yourself first. Learn how to create your own self care plan with tips from MentalHealthFirstAid.org.

#Endthestigma - Take a look at the National Alliance on Mental Illness' (NAMI) HelpLine Resource list to continue the conversation and reduce the stigma. View Resources

Please consider supporting UCS
Now more than ever, support from our donors is vital to ensure that we can 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

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We respect **WOMEN, MEN and NON-BINARY** people • We value **BLACK LIVES** • We stand with our **LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY MEMBERS** • We celebrate **CHILDREN** • We stand with **IMMIGRANTS, REFUGEES**, with **INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**, and **PEOPLES OF ALL FAITHS** • We support **INDIVIDUALS** and **FAMILIES** challenged by mental health, substance use and developmental disabilities.

We stand with our **COMMUNITY**.

**HATE HAS NO BUSINESS HERE.**

**All are Welcome Here.**