

BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY



UCS
UNITED COUNSELING SERVICE

CLIENT HANDBOOK

24-HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE

BENNINGTON

100 Ledge Hill Drive
Bennington, VT 05201
(802) 442-5491

MANCHESTER

5312 Main Street
Manchester Center, VT 05255
(802) 362-3950

HOW WE HELP

Anyone can call United Counseling Service. We provide support, answer questions and connect you to the right resources at UCS or in the community. **We are here for you 24/7/365.**

UCS has been designated a Center of Excellence by Vermont Care Partners and offers:

- Community-based mental health and substance use treatment
- 24/7 mobile crisis intervention and stabilization
- Same day access for clinical intakes
- Employee assistance program
- Employment programs for clients
- Outpatient mental health and comprehensive service systems for adults, children, families and seniors with mental illness, intellectual disabilities, and emotional and behavioral disabilities
- Community Rehabilitation and Treatment
- Bennington County Head Start / Early Head Start
- Mentoring at UCS
- Onsite pharmacy
- Psychiatric services
- Adult family care
- Peer support groups (NAMI and Vermont Psychiatric Survivors)

Our Mission:

**Building a stronger
community** by empowering individuals
and families to live healthy and meaningful lives.

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LOCATIONS

United Counseling Service Main Office

100 Ledge Hill Drive, Bennington, VT 05201

(802) 442-5491

United Counseling Service Northshire Office

5312 Main Street, Manchester Center, VT 05255

(802) 362-3950

Atwood Center for Developmental Services

335 Dewey Street, Bennington, VT 05201

Battelle House Crisis Stabilization Center

348 Dewey Street, Bennington, VT 05201

Burgess Road Youth and Family Services

21 Burgess Road, Bennington, VT 05201

Community Rehabilitation and Treatment

316 Dewey Street, Bennington, VT 05201

Youth and Family Services

314 Dewey Street, Bennington, VT 05201

Head Start/Early Head Start Main Office

2 Park Street, North Bennington, VT 05257

(802) 442-3686

Early Head Start Infant and Toddler Center

100 Ledge Hill Drive, Bennington, VT 05201

Head Start/Early Head Start

5312 Main Street, Manchester Center, VT 05255

Head Start/Early Head Start

59 River Road, North Bennington, VT 05257

Head Start/Early Head Start

97 School House Road, Pownal, VT 05261

UCS Residential Facilities

Autumn House Group Home

Bank Street Independent Living Complex

Gatling House Group Home

South Street Group Home

Union Street Group Home

HOURS OF OPERATION

The standard hours of operation for United Counseling Service are 8 am to 7 pm Monday–Thursday and 8 am to 5 pm on Friday. Our Northshire location is open 8 am to 5 pm Monday–Friday. *Some services, including residential support and crisis services, are provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.*

HOW TO GET HELP

Anyone can call United Counseling Service's main number 802-442-5491 to get help. During regular business hours you will speak with Universal Access, our single point of contact for triage and linkage to appropriate services. Universal Access operates during general business hours.

EMERGENCY SERVICE

If you are in crisis and need immediate assistance, call:

(802) 442-5491 in Bennington

or

(802) 362-3950 in Manchester.

UCS provides mental health services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When our offices are closed, the UCS Emergency operator will take your name and phone number and a UCS representative will return your call as quickly as possible. UCS Emergency Service provides individuals in crisis with immediate assistance, offers post-crisis supportive services, and helps arrange additional services as needed.

FOR A YOUTH-RELATED CRISIS

The Family Emergency Services (FES) program provides mobile outreach services to families experiencing a youth-related crisis. The hours of operation for FES services are 8 am to 8 pm Monday–Friday. If you need emergency assistance, call (802) 442-1700. **After hours**, your call will be answered by UCS Emergency Service Staff by calling (802) 442-5491.

FOR A DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES CRISIS

If services are needed immediately, contact DS at (802) 445-7318, 8 am to 4 pm Monday–Friday. **After hours** your call will be answered by UCS Emergency Service Staff by calling (802) 442-5491.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Mental Health Programs

- Child, adult, family, and couple's outpatient counseling
- Variety of psychotherapy groups
- Mental health and intellectual disabilities evaluation
- Community education and consultation services
- Employee Assistance Program

Substance Use Programs

- Alcohol and drug use counseling, education and prevention
- Substance use treatment referrals
- Public Inebriate Program
- Assessment for and facilitation of detox or residential services
- Consultation to agencies and schools
- Rocking Horse (providing parenting support for women with substance use problems)

Community Rehabilitation and Treatment for Adults with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness

- Transitional residential program
- Community support services
- Supported employment program
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Housing advocacy services
- Individual counseling
- Group counseling
- Peer support groups

Emergency Services

- 24-hour emergency service
- Battelle House Crisis Stabilization Center

Psychiatric Services

- Psychiatric evaluation
- Medication management
- Walk-in clinic
- Consultation to primary care physicians
- Psychiatric services at Southern Vermont Medical Center
- Consultation to other clinicians
- TeleHealth
- Psychopharmacology genetic testing

Programs for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

- Residential services
- Community support services
- Family support services
- Employment services and ongoing job support
- Crisis services
- Shared living
- Bridge Case Management
- Family Managed Respite
- Flexible Family Funding
- Personal care assessments
- Supported Independent Living
- Case management
- Choices for Care Program (Adult Family Care)

Youth and Family Services

- Psychiatric Urgent Care for Kids (PUCK)
- Family Emergency Services (FES) and crisis intervention
- Runaway and homeless youth services
- Early childhood mental health services and consultation
- Individual, group and family counseling
- Therapeutic case management services
- Camp Be A Kid
- After-School Program
- Teens for Change
- Community skills and support
- School-based clinical services
- Employment services
- Transitional Living Programs
- Mentoring at UCS

Early Childhood Services

- Bennington County Early Head Start
- Bennington County Head Start
- Bennington County Early Education Initiative (EEI)

NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE

United Counseling Service (UCS) complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. UCS does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

UCS Provides:

Free communication aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as:

- Qualified sign language interpreters
- Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, etc.)

Free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:

- Qualified interpreters
- Information written in other languages

**If you need these services, contact UCS at
(802) 442-5491**

If you believe that UCS has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, you can file a grievance with UCS by mail or by phone at: UCS, Grievance Coordinator, 100 Ledge Hill Drive, PO Box 588, Bennington, VT 05201.

You may also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Civil Rights online at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov>, or by mail at U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue SW, Room 509F, HHH Building, Washington, DC 20201, or by phone at 1-800-368-1019, 800-537-7697 (TDD).

PARTICIPATING IN SERVICES

The following information is designed to help you receive the services you need as quickly and effectively as possible.

Fees

In some cases, fee waivers may be available in individual circumstances. Many insurance plans provide coverage for behavioral health services. If you are a Bennington County resident and are unable to pay the full fee, you can apply for reduced-fee assistance.

Our staff will review your health insurance information and, if needed, help you arrange fee assistance. Please bring your Medicaid or other insurance card with you.

Clients who are not eligible for traditional Medicaid and do not have other insurance will be provided Health Exchange information. We encourage you to apply before your first visit to assure coverage prior to treatment.

A Team Approach

Your first contact with UCS may be by phone or, during office hours, by coming directly to one of our offices. You will be connected to a Universal Access Coordinator who will ask you a few questions and inform you of our Same Day Access hours of availability.

We offer Same Day Access for Clinical Intake availability Monday through Friday to ensure individuals receive the right care, at the right time, in the right place, with the right provider. Your first appointment will last approximately 90 minutes and will include your orientation to the Agency and a comprehensive assessment. Before you leave your initial appointment, the Intake Clinician will align you with the appropriate treatment provider and you will be scheduled for your next appointment.

Much of the work done at UCS is done through a team approach. Depending on where you receive your service at UCS, you may have several staff members involved in your care.

How can I measure my progress?

Progress toward your goals that you and your treatment team identified will be evaluated throughout the course of your care. You are encouraged to give and request feedback about your progress with your team.

continued...

What if I have a problem with my treatment?

If you are having a problem with your care, first talk with your treatment provider(s). If that does not resolve the problem, you can ask to speak with your provider's supervisor. If those channels are ineffective, please see the section on the UCS grievance policy.

Cancellation and No-Show Protocol

Your engagement in services is helpful to your success. Because of the high demand for our services, **we require at least twenty-four (24) hours' notice to cancel an appointment.** If you fail to notify UCS, you may be billed for the appointment. Your treatment provider will advise you of our scheduling practices and No-Show protocol.

Our No-Show Policy states that if you miss two sessions, we may no longer hold your appointment for you.

Transition Planning and Discharge from Care

At the beginning of your care, your treatment team will work with you on a transition plan that ensures coordination of supports during and after services at the agency. This includes your accomplishments and progress toward well-being, and identifies support systems to assist you in your continued care and supports.

The transition planning process is person-centered and is individualized to meet your needs while you are actively receiving treatment and beyond. This plan will help you and your team determine when services are no longer needed and a discharge plan can be created.

SAFETY STANDARDS

UCS strives to provide a safe and comfortable environment for all of its clients and employees.

- **Smoking and tobacco use are prohibited** in and around all agency facilities and grounds.
- **No weapons of any kind**, including but not limited to firearms, explosives, knives and projectiles, are allowed on UCS premises.
- **UCS is a drug- and alcohol-free** workplace.
- **UCS reserves the right to restrict access to care** due to violation of any of the above safety standards. Rights and privileges may be regained through a negotiated process with your primary service provider or his/her supervisor.
- **A person mandated to treatment by the Department of Corrections may not revoke a consent** given by them until there has been a formal and effective termination or revocation of such release. This release allows for unrestricted communications.

STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOL

The agency has adopted a Standard Response Protocol to be implemented in case of emergency situations. The following protocols are to be followed, as applicable:

LOCKOUT – A threat or hazard is outside of the building. Secure the perimeter.

LOCKDOWN – There is a threat inside of the building. Lock, lights, out of sight.

EVACUATE A LOCATION – Evacuate to a designated location. Occupants and staff move from one location to another.

SHELTER – Used when the need for personal protection is necessary.

Staff will guide you in the unlikely event that the Standard Response Protocol is activated.

CLIENT BILL OF RIGHTS

You have the right to:

- **Receive considerate and respectful care** which includes freedom from any physical, sexual, fiduciary (financial), or psychological abuse including humiliating, threatening, and exploiting actions;
- **Understand what your problem is**, what treatment is recommended and why, who will give the treatment, and what outcome to expect;
- **Be involved in a process of informed choice**, in-formed refusal, and/or expression of choice related to preference of your treatment services, choice of service provider, and participation in research projects;
- **Expect that all** communications and records pertaining to your care will be treated as confidential;
- **Have continuity of care** when you are referred for services outside this agency;
- Examine and receive an **explanation of your bill**;
- **Participate in all aspects** of your treatment, including development of your treatment plan;
- **Have access** to self-help and advocacy services;
- **Voice complaints** or lodge an appeal without recrimination;
- **All legal protection and due process** for status as an outpatient, both voluntary and involuntary, as defined under Vermont law.

Your responsibilities are...

- **To be honest** in your presentation of your problems and to tell those working with you how you feel about what is happening to you;
- **To be actively involved** in the development of your treatment plan that will outline your problems, needs, goals and expected outcome;
- **To be considerate** of others and their privacy;
- **To present to your counselor any questions, complaints or concerns** about your counseling plans or goals so that you may reach an agreement on any problem hindering your progress.

*UCS Client Bill of Rights may be found online at
<https://www.ucsvt.org/bill-of-rights>*

CONFIDENTIALITY

Federal and state laws protect your confidential information. Protecting your confidentiality is important to us. All UCS employees understand the importance of confidentiality, are trained to preserve it, and are subject to disciplinary action if they violate your confidentiality. Below are exceptions specific to HIPAA and 42CFR Part 2:

- When there is a **genuine medical emergency**, or when there is **imminent danger** to a second person or others;
- When a person has a serious medical condition and is **incapable of rational communication**, the family or others may be notified;
- **When we are authorized** by the client and/or compelled to do so by the court;
- Vermont law mandates that a mental health professional, who has **reasonable cause to believe that any child has been abused or neglected**, must report such abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families.
- Additionally, any **suspicion of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of the elderly** (age 60 or older), or a **disabled adult** with a diagnosed physical or mental impairment, must be reported;
- By Vermont law, **if a clinical staff member has reason to believe that you will commit a serious crime** against either property or another person, that staff is required to take reasonable steps to warn the intended victim;
- **If you are so impaired by alcohol or other drugs** as to pose a threat to society in general (e.g. driving a car), the law is interpreted as requiring staff to take steps to protect the public by rendering you harmless (e.g. taking your keys) and/or informing proper authorities.
- **Your records are securely safeguarded.** UCS follows HIPAA and federally funded substance use treatment program (42CFR Part 2) guidelines.
- **If it becomes necessary** for UCS to release information without your permission, we will limit the information released to the minimum amount necessary under the circumstances.

For more information regarding the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and 42CFR Part 2, please see the Notice of Privacy Practices.

*The UCS Privacy Policy is available online at
<https://www.ucsvt.org/privacy-policy/>*

CLIENT SATISFACTION AND GRIEVANCES

United Counseling Service will provide assistance to any client who has a disagreement about services. *If you feel that any of your rights have been denied*, you are encouraged to resolve issues directly with the parties involved. If you feel that has not resolved your problem, you may request to speak with their supervisor. If that is not adequate, you may complete a Grievance and Appeal Form, available from your treatment provider(s) or the reception staff. You are not required to submit your grievance or complaint in writing. You can make a verbal grievance to any staff.

Grievances should be filed if you have been denied services or you feel you did not get access appropriately to needed services. Other problems and concerns should be submitted as a grievance.

*UCS Grievance and Appeals Policy is available at
<https://www.ucsvt.org/grievance-appeals-policy/>*

Grievance Procedure

If you believe you have been denied access to a benefit, service, program, or activity offered by UCS because of a disability, you may file a complaint with:

*Grievance and Appeals Coordinator
United Counseling Service
100 Ledge Hill Drive
P.O. Box 588
Bennington, VT 05201*

Client Satisfaction

UCS seeks input from clients regarding their progress and satisfaction with services. You may be asked to fill out a satisfaction survey at an office visit or when you have completed treatment. You are also encouraged to talk, first and foremost, with your primary service provider regarding any ideas you may have that would be helpful to you or would improve the overall performance of UCS.

Ethical and Professional Behavior

UCS respects the dignity of each individual served and will assist in promoting the full development of each individual's potential. All employees are required to conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner and adhere to a comprehensive code of ethics. You may receive a copy of the Standard of Ethical and Professional Behavior upon request.

*UCS Standard of Ethical and Professional Behavior is
available online at <https://www.ucsvt.org/code-of-ethics/>*

NOTES

CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

United Counseling Service is an affiliate of Vermont Care Partners, a statewide network of sixteen non-profit community-based agencies providing mental health, substance use and intellectual and developmental services and supports.



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ucsvt.org