We are all in this together. We 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.

How a therapist can help

When we feel ill, we usually try to cope on our own. We might go to bed early or change our behavior in ways that we think might help. We might even tell friends and family about our symptoms to see if they have any helpful advice. If the problem doesn't get better, we call to make an appointment with our medical provider.

We are living in stressful times. Many of the stresses we are dealing with are unexpected and unavoidable. They can build up and become difficult to manage. Coping with emotional distress may mean getting some sleep, having a healthy meal, getting some exercise, or chatting with a supportive friend or family member. While these are good initial steps, we can't expect that we will always have, or be aware of, the strategies that we need to cope. Our friends and family are not always capable of being the listeners we need. The average person is not a mental health professional. You are not expected to know exactly what to do to manage your stress, anxiety, or depression. So be patient with yourself. If you've tried to resolve emotional discomfort on your own without success, it's time to get help from a professional...Read more.

Rachel Darby, PMHNP-BC is a Nurse Practitioner at United Counseling Service.

The News Project - UCS: More than COVID
In case you missed it, Lorna Mattern, Executive Director of UCS and Lori Vadakin, Director of Outpatient Mental Health and Substance sat down with Andrew McKeever to discuss services and programs and the changes that have occurred during the pandemic.

**Watch the News Project**

**Therapy and support groups available**

UCS has increased the number of therapy and support groups being offered to the community. Topics range from anxiety and depression to wellness during COVID to several groups dealing with substance use issues.

“We are seeing a significant increase in the number of inquiries for our services and we are responding to the need,” said Executive Director Lorna Mattern. “We understand this is a difficult time and we want to offer as much support as we can in this environment.”

Most groups will be held virtually via zoom, unless otherwise noted. For detailed information on the groups visit ucsvt.org/groups. To sign up for one of the groups and services with UCS call (802) 442-5491.

**Extra Support During the Pandemic?**

**COVID SUPPORT VT**

During these difficult times could you use some emotional support and a listening ear?

Are you looking for connections to community resources during the pandemic?

COVID Support VT is a statewide program offering free and confidential emotional support and connections to resources for anyone needing help.

They offer a wide range of supports on their [website](https://ucsvt.org/). If you or someone you know could use some support coping with the pandemic, reach out to COVID Support VT. Call 2-1-1 to reach a Support Counselor.

For more see their [self-care tips and resources flier](https://ucsvt.org/) and [daily stress management plan](https://ucsvt.org/).

**Youth and adults gain from mentoring relationships**

Mentoring at UCS continues to actively connect adult mentors and youth mentees in the community. As social restrictions continue, kids and teens are having to cope with the dissolution of normal routines and contact with extended family and other supportive adults.
Boredom, anxiety, stress, isolation, and loneliness are all possibilities being experienced by youth and adults alike. Mentoring at UCS offers a mutually beneficial solution to many of these issues.

Erika Crowers, MSW, who oversees Mentoring at UCS, has been with the organization for more than ten years. As a case manager, clinical therapist, and crisis counselor, she has provided care to individuals of all ages and demographics. Since joining the mentoring program this spring, she works closely with program coordinator Laurie Sallisky to recruit, train, and support mentors and mentees...Read more.

"Mentoring allows me to be creative and share things with my mentee that I enjoy doing such as gardening and taking walks. I enjoy teaching her about the process it takes to do an activity and how sometimes we have to plan for them.

Having Covid happen during the time we meet at school was tough because she really needed that break during her recess at school to meet and regroup.... I can’t wait to be able to explore more of the things she wants to try and do. "

Betsy Hurley, Mentor with Mentoring at UCS.

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Select Board praises changes at Recreation Center

By Jim Therrien, Bennington Banner

Select Board members this week praised progress toward completion of a $3.5 million addition to the Recreation Center on Gage Street to house childhood programming and services of the local Head Start program.

Board members also were encouraged by an expansion in youth and other programs at the center, despite the COVID-19 epidemic, since the Berkshire Family YMCA began managing the center for the town.

The 13,500-square-foot addition is being funded through grants received by United Counseling Service, which manages the Head Start program. The project, undertaken in cooperation with the town, also includes significant work on the playgrounds and an expansion of the parking areas...Read more.
Please Consider Supporting UCS

Support from our donors is vital to ensure that UCS can continue to meet the growing needs of our community. Please consider making a donation. Your donation makes a difference. We are here for you, can you be here for us?

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

You can also make a secure online donation using a credit card:
DONATE NOW

Join our team!

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.

Articles of Interest

Building Resilience During a Difficult Year

Health Matters: Teenagers, parents and COVID, by Meghan Gunn, MD.
A recent CBS story, "The mental health toll of COVID-19," references a survey taken by The National Council for Behavioral Health which revealed that more than half (54%) of behavioral health organizations have closed programs due to COVID-19.

Additional Resources for COVID-19 Information

COVID Support VT  
Vermont Department of Health  
Centers 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

$200 million donated to charities

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Please remember us this holiday season. Support United Counseling Service when shopping this holiday season at Amazon Smile.

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

**UNITED COUNSELING SERVICE**

**UCS**

**BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY**

**Vermont Care Partners CENTER OF EXCELLENCE**