

### **What is HOPE House?**

HOPE House (Healthy Options for Psychiatric Emergencies) opened in 2024 and includes Psychiatric Urgent Care for Kids (PUCK) program that serves children up to age 18 and an Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) for elementary school aged children. HOPE House strives to give children and adolescents opportunities to stay within their community rather than getting a higher level of care in a hospital setting or a diversion or residential program. The goal is to keep families together.

### **What is Psychiatric Urgent Care for Kids (PUCK)?**

The PUCK program is designed to help youth up to age 18 in Bennington County experiencing mental or behavioral health crises. PUCK is designed to keep youth out of the Emergency Department (ED) and provides immediate crisis intervention and stabilization in a therapeutic setting. PUCK provides short term intensive intervention that may include an assessment, crisis stabilization, psychiatric consult, and skill building.

### **How do I access the PUCK program?**

An emergency clinician at UCS determines eligibility and must refer a child to PUCK. Emergency personnel, such as the Bennington Police Department and/or the Vermont State police, may request PUCK for a child in their care.

### **Who is eligible for the PUCK program?**

The following criteria will be examined to determine admission to PUCK:

1. The child is under the age of 18 years old and lives in Bennington County.
2. The child has been screened by a mental health crisis clinician.
3. The child's guardian and the child agree to be admitted to the PUCK program.

### **What is the duration of PUCK?**

The duration of PUCK is determined by the need of the consumer. A single PUCK visit could range from three to six hours. A youth can be seen in PUCK up to 3 consecutive days if needed.

### **What are the Hours of PUCK?**

PUCK is open from 8:30am-3:00pm Monday- Friday

### **What is Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP)?**

The Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) is a structured program designed to support elementary school aged children (kindergarten-sixth grade) who are not able to meet their mental health needs on an hour per week basis. This program is designed for children who may be struggling with moderate to severe mental health issues including depression, social or other anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, coping with family issues (divorce, loss, etc.), and or other behaviors that are difficult to stop, excluding alcohol/drug addiction. The IOP program will provide adequate support to help children manage their mental health challenges while allowing them to continue to live at home and attend school.

### **How do I access the IOP program?**

An internal referral from a provider is required to access the children's IOP, as well as current status as a UCS client. UCS is not currently accepting community referrals at this time. Clients should talk to their UCS provider for information about enrollment and the referral process.

### **Who is eligible for the IOP program?**

Clients of UCS shall be considered for admissions when they meet the following criteria:

1. The child is in kindergarten through sixth grade.
2. The child exhibits psychological or behavioral symptoms that significantly impair their functioning in two or more areas of life: home, school, community, and/or other important areas of functioning.
3. Program attendance for both child and parent are expected to improve or maintain the individual's current behavioral functioning and prevent any further decline, which would result in being referred to a higher level of care.
4. All assessments during enrollment indicate a need for IOP services.

### **What is the average length of treatment?**

The current average length of treatment is three to nine months depending on individual needs.

### **What is the weekly commitment?**

IOP runs three days per week for a total of nine hours. Weekly commitment consists of two hours of group therapy, three times a week, as well as one hour of individual therapy, at least one hour of family work weekly (this could be family therapy and or family coaching/ groups), one hour of case management, and one hour of extra services such as community supports, respite, and/or United Counseling Service therapeutic after school program.

### **What is the difference between IOP and a partial hospitalization program?**

The main differences between IOP and hospital diversion programs include the following:

1. While your child attends the IOP, they will still be in the community, living at home and attending school.
2. IOP can be up to nine months depending on the individual needs, while hospital programs are typically five to seven days of treatment.
3. IOP coordinates monthly school meetings to ensure treatment is appropriate.

United Counseling Service's HOPE House is carefully designed to help your child heal from a variety of challenges so they can grow and thrive. With expertly led family, group, and individual therapy, we will help your child sustain their well-being in the community with the help of everyone around them.

For more information about any of our program call 802-442-5491 or visit [ucsvt.org](http://ucsvt.org).