

December 2020

Upcoming events

Annual Meeting of the Membership, Dec 2, 4 PM
For the election of our officers and newest board member. All members are invited to attend. Invitations and ballots are being mailed.

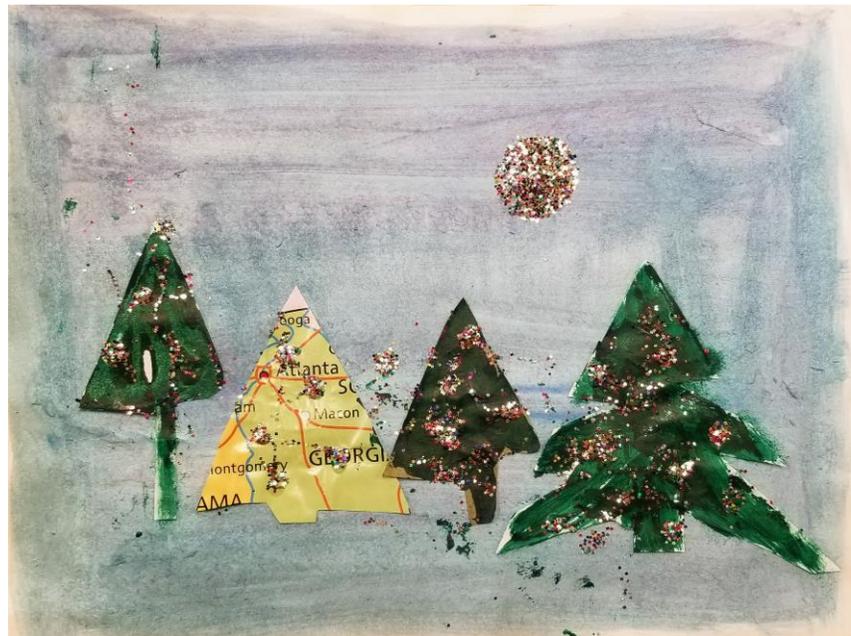
NH Mental Health Peer Alliance, Tue., Dec 15, 10 AM.
Come, let your voice be heard. The Alliance is made up of adults with lived experience who want to improve mental health services in NH, organizing to advocate, educate, and inform. Please contact greg@connectionspeersupport.org for an invitation.

Board of Directors Meeting Wed., Dec 16, 4 PM Members and staff welcome and encouraged to attend. Please contact greg@connectionspeersupport.org for an invitation.

Excursion to 3S Artspace Thurs, Dec 3, 10 AM
Visit *Woven Female Landscape* and add your own contribution! We will wear masks and social distance. Call to reserve transportation.



Come Join Us for Some Seasonal Cheer



Season's greetings!

Some traditions still go on, though with modifications. We will be trimming the Connections Christmas tree on Monday, December 7 at 1 PM, complete with carols and cookies. It promises to be a festive occasion. We will be following the same guidelines as our other groups (masks, maximum of five participants, etc.). If you would like to join us, please call 427-6966.

We have one or two more surprises as well; check out page 5.

CPSC SCHEDULE DECEMBER 2020

Connections will be closed
Friday, December 4 and
Thursday and Friday,
December 24 and 25, in
observance of Christmas.

Check-in

Mon thru Fri, 9:15 AM and 1:15 PM. **Mon and Fri are online only.** A chance to connect with peers, set goals, or reflect upon your day.

- **Hearing Voices Group (online only)**
Monday 11 AM. Support for those who are hearing voices, seeing visions, or experiencing other unusual sensory experiences.
- **Journaling Group (online only)**
Mon 2 PM. Reflections and inspiration. Come to journal or spin a tale. A directed prompt will be offered, but all topics and genres are welcomed and encouraged.
- **Dual Recovery (online only)**
Thurs 4 PM. For those struggling with substance use disorder and mental health issues, to share coping strategies and support each other.
- **Adult Coloring**
Tue 11 AM. A quiet time to unwind and reduce stress while fostering creativity, all in a low-key environment.
- **WRAP Topics**
Tue 2 PM or Wed 10 AM. Wellness Recovery Action Plan, is a process where you explore and create a plan for yourself to stay well, respond to stressors, or even how to respond to a crisis. It is a powerful evidence-based wellness tool.

- **Arts and Crafts**
Tue 3 PM A time for creative expression or observing the seasons.
- **Art with Paul: Recovery through Art**
Wed 11 AM. Each week we will talk about different aspects of recovery and complete a related art project that visualizes the theme.
- **Computer Skills**
Wed 2 PM. A time to get comfortable using a computer. Topics based on member interests.
- **Job Skills**
Wed 3 PM
Are you looking for a job? Whether you want to brush up your resume or practice for an interview, we're here to support your success.
- **IPS Topics**
Thur 10 AM in center. Intentional Peer Support is the model we practice here at Connections. This group gives us a chance to learn and deepen our practice.
- **Gratitude**
Thur 11 AM. Here we use affirmations, creative exercise to promote positive thinking
- **Depression and Anxiety Group**
Thur 2 PM. We offer a safe place to explore difficult feelings such as sadness and fear, and learn from each other how we can respond to them.
- **Assertiveness Skills**
Thur 3 PM. Each week we will brainstorm, role play, and practice self-advocacy skills we need speak up for ourselves.
- **Grief and Loss (online only)**
Fri 2 PM. A safe place to process feelings of grief and loss, as well as learn ways to move forward.

CPSC SCHEDULE DECEMBER 2020

	Monday Remote Only	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday Remote Only
9:15-10:00	AM Check-in	AM Check-in Chair Yoga/ Stretching	AM Check-in Chair Yoga/ Stretching	AM Check-in Chair Yoga/ Stretching	AM Check-in
10-10:45		Music Group	IPS/WRAP Topics	IPS Topics	
11-11:45	Hearing Voices	Adult Coloring	Art w/Paul: Recovery Through Art	Gratitude	
12-1	Closed for Cleaning				
1:15-1:45	PM Check-in 1:00 Walking Group	PM Check-in	PM Check-in	PM Check-in	PM Check-in 1:00 Walking Group
2:00-2:45	Journal Group	IPS/WRAP Topics	Computer Skills	Anxiety/ Depression	Grief and Loss
3:00-3:45-	Dual Recovery	Holiday Arts and Crafts	Job Skills	Assertiveness	

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday groups will be held at our center at 544 Islington St, Portsmouth, as well as online. Monday and Friday groups are online only. The center is available for drop-ins, but we suggest you call ahead to make sure there is room.

Due to social distancing requirements, for groups held in center, you will need to call us at 603-427-6966 by 4 PM the day before to reserve a spot or arrange transportation to the center the following morning, and by 11 AM same day to come in the afternoon. All participants must wear a mask while in the center or in the van. Please call or visit our website to learn about the additional procedures we have in place for everyone's safety.

Connections' physical center may close because of snow and ice. If the weather is iffy please call to make sure we are open. In case of snow closure, all programming will still be available online

Join groups online or by phone through this link:

Please join any group from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/709997085>

New to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/709997085>

**You can also dial in using your phone.
United States: +1 (571) 317-3122 Access
Code: 709-997-085**

NEWS AND HAPPENINGS

A Timely Topic: Cyber-safety

Detective Rochelle Jones of the Portsmouth Police Department stopped by (virtually!) to talk about cyber-safety. For many of us staying home means spending more time online, but are we keeping ourselves and our information safe?



We appreciated Detective Jones' knowledge and tips about the online world, and several members also appreciated her detailed knowledge of Portsmouth neighborhoods and issues, including their own.

Thank you so much for your time, Detective!

Are you following these basic online safety rules?

- **Think before you post**
Don't upload or share anything you wouldn't want the whole world to see. Once you post something, you lose control of it, especially if someone else screenshots or shares it.
- **Don't share personal details**
Keep things like your address, phone number, full name, and date of birth private, and check what people can see in your privacy settings. Remember that people can use small clues like a school logo in a photo to find out a lot about you.
- **Watch out for phishing and scams**
Phishing is when someone tries to trick you into giving them information, like your password. Someone might also try to trick you by saying they can make you famous or that they're from a talent agency. Never click links from emails or messages that ask you to log in or share your details, even if you think they might be genuine. If you're asked to log into a website, go to the app or site directly instead.
- **Think about who you're talking to**
There are lots of ways that people try to trick you into trusting them online. Even if you like and trust someone you've met online, never share personal information with them like your address, full name, and never send them money.
- **Keep your device secure**
Make sure that you're keeping your information and device secure by allowing all updates and using anti-virus software
- **Use a strong password and never give it out**
You should never give out your password or log-in information. Make your password more than 8 characters and use a mix of lower case letters, upper case letters, numbers and special characters (like %, #, or !)
- **Cover your webcam**
Some viruses will let someone access your webcam without you knowing, so make sure you cover your webcam whenever you're not using it.

NEWS AND HAPPENINGS

Seasonal Cheer, Even in 2020

We have a new group for the month of December: Holiday Arts and Crafts. Because we cannot all be together, we will bring this one to you! Each week you will get a kit of supplies to make at least two ornaments, one to keep and one for the Connections Christmas tree. We will all gather for online to craft together, knowing that we can be together even while we are apart. To take part, call us at 603-427-6966 or email nina@connectionspeersupport.org.

In addition, we are in the planning stages of a Holiday Party different from our usual ones, but one that still carries the spirit of the season. Do you have ideas? Please share them!

And stay tuned; we will offer details as they develop!

And here is a great FREE resource from the same folks who bring us WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan)

A New WRAP Guide for Overcoming Isolation During the COVID-19 Crisis

You do have to put it in your shopping cart and check out but there is no charge. We will be using this guide in groups this month. Come join us.

<https://mentalhealthrecovery.com/info-center/a-new-wrap-guide-for-overcoming-isolation-during-the-covid-19-crisis/>

A Bridge to Japan: A Poetry Broadside Contest Presented by the Portsmouth (NH) Poet Laureate Program

A poetry broadside is a sheet of paper with a poem printed on the front side. It may include an illustration in any media, and signatures by the poet and artist.

- One dimensional work no larger than 11 x 17 inches.
- Includes a poem (any form) of no more than 30 lines.
- Shows a Japanese influence in any way (art &/or poem).
- Must not incorporate any copyright protected work.

Winning entries will be awarded cash prizes and will be gifted to Portsmouth's sister city, Nichinan, Japan

https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/sites/default/files/2020-11/Broadside_contest.pdf

FEATURED GROUP



Grief and Loss

During the holidays, feeling grief can seem out of place. In Connections Grief and Loss group, you will be with people who understand. A member reflects:

Facing grief has weighed my entire adult life down, but not all at once. I once heard grief described as oncoming waves, knocking us over when we least expect it. For me, I'll be moving along steadily when I'm taken aback by thinking how much I miss my dad, or my best friend, who died at age 37. Other times it's seeing couples walking together, hand in hand.

Grief is part of life for everyone but the pain lingers at times.

It helps me to read about the grief stages, or biographies of people who experienced grief, coming out the other side.

And this from the group's facilitator, Nicole:

"As someone who has experienced the loss of my own life partner, I lived and value going through this journey with mutual support.

"Come join us for our Healing from Grief and Loss group. Here we laugh and cry, break and mend. It is a struggle to go on for us, but a little at a time, together we can figure it out."

Connections' Healing from Grief and Loss Group meets online only on Fridays at 2:00. Please reach out to us if you have any questions about this or any other of our offerings.

603-427-6966 or nina@connectionspeersupport.org

MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

This month Mary, Shannon, and Rachel were all about the leaves...



While Betsy marched to the beat of a different drummer and was inspired to try her hand at mandalas ...



But the leaves kept



FALLING...

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Please send any additions or corrections to

info@connectionspeersupport.org

Crisis Text: Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a trained crisis counselor
www.crisistextline.org

To connect with local resources in the Seacoast area, go to www.211nh.org OR call 211.

Service Link:

Your link to information and support services within your community.

<https://www.servicelink.nh.gov/>

Toll Free Number: 1-866-634-9412

Peer Respite:

Peer Respite is a 24-hour, peer-driven, short-term, non-medical alternative to hospitalization. To begin your pre-qualifying application and interview, call the following respite centers: **PEER RESPITE PROGRAMS ARE SUSPENDED DUE TO COVID-19. PLEASE CALL OR CHECK PSA WEBSITES FOR UPDATES**

Stepping Stones, Claremont, NH. Respite 603-543-1388, Stepping Stone Peer Center: 603-543-1388,

Toll Free: 1-888-582-0920,
www.steppingstonenextstep.org

H.E.A.R.T.S. Peer Support of Greater Nashua, Nashua, NH. Crisis Respite: 603-864-8769, Peer Support Center: 603-882-8400,
www.heartspsa.org.

Monadnock Area Peer Support Agency, Keene NH 03431, Respite 603 352-5093 or 866-352-5093,
www.monadnockpsa.org

Legal Help:

NH Legal Assistance 603 431-7411
NH Pro Bono 1 800-639-5290
Legal Advice & Referral Center 1800-639-5290
Disability Rights Center: 1-800-834-1721

Meals:

Salvation Army Food Truck parked on State St near South Church, **Portsmouth:** Dinner Daily 5:00 PM, Breakfast Mon-Fri 7:00-8:00 AM, Takeout only

Middle St Baptist Church, 18 Court St, Portsmouth Community Lunch, Wednesday 12 PM-1 PM. Takeout only

St. John's Church, Chapel St Portsmouth Community Lunch: Thursday 12 PM-1 PM. Takeout only

Community Health Services:

Families First: Providing health and dental care, as well as parent and family support.

Portsmouth location: 100 Campus Drive, Suite 12, Portsmouth (603) 422-8208

Food Banks:

Operation Blessing: 600A Lafayette Rd, Portsmouth: Call for an appointment: (603) 430-8561

Gather: 210 West Rd, Suite 3, Portsmouth. Monday-Thursday 10 AM – 3 PM by appointment, Friday 9 AM-1 PM. info@gathernh.org or 603 436 9641

Mental Health/Substance Misuse Resources:

Alcoholics Anonymous, A.A. World Services, Inc., 24-Hour Hotline 1-800-593-3330; www.aa.org/

NAMI NH, www.naminh.org

National Suicide Prevention 1 800-273-TALK (8255),
www.suicidepreventionlife.org/

NH Specialized Information and Referral Center is available 24/7, 365 days a year. Simply dial 211

Granite Pathways Rehabilitation Services 10 Ferry St, Suite 319, Concord NH granitepathways.org

Safe Harbor, 603-225-9540,
www.safeharborrecoverynh.org

Seacoast Mental Health Center, Inc. 603 431-6703, <http://www.smhc-nh.org/>

Seacoast Pathways, 603-812-9031,
www.seacoastpathways.org/

Transportation:

ACT (Alliance for Community Transportation) 603-834-6010,
triplink@communityrides.org

COAST (Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation) (603) 743-5777 www.coastbus.org

VIRTUAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

Weekly Meditation at the Portsmouth Library

Wed, 12:15 PM

An old favorite continues. Join a variety of teachers for a midday break to reset your day. No registration required; connect via Zoom.

<https://zoom.us/j/9491308975?pwd=RFI4THdMQnR4VGlrbdmRVEpGMjcwZz09#success> Password: 3GWdHC

Saturday Morning Tai Chi

Sat, 9 AM, No class: December 26, 2020 & January 2, 2021.

Appropriate for all levels. Beginners Welcome. Seniors welcome. No charge. Hosted online via Zoom by Bristol, CT Public Library. A valid email is required to register.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/saturday-morning-tai-chi-tickets-126896726525?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

Pub-style trivia at the comforts of home, hosted by Buzzworthy Trivia

Thurs Dec 3, 6 PM

This is your chance to dust off some of your bar trivia knowledge, show off your skills, and have a good time with colleagues while staying safe! Serious bragging rights are on the line! RSVP Required to get Zoom Link! Zoom link will be provided on the evening prior to the event.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/awma-ams-december-2020-virtual-trivia-night-tickets-127967280581?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

Online Book Talk: *Share a Book or Two*

Mon, Dec 21, 1 PM

Connect with other readers online, and share your recommendations! Bring a three-line description of an adult book (or two) that you enjoyed, or just come and listen to community favorites. We'll be there to guide the discussion and share how you can find more titles you'll like – especially ones that are available online!

<https://zoom.us/j/9491308975?pwd=RFI4THdMQnR4VGlrbdmRVEpGMjcwZz09> Password: 3GWdHC

LESSONS LEARNED FROM A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Thurs, Dec 17, 6:30 PM

Explore the timeless classic and explore the underlying themes and the dynamic relationships of the characters. The audience is transported to a simpler time, all while being shown the truth about themselves and those in their lives. Sure, to bring a smile to even ol' Scrooge himself, A great motivational twist on a true classic.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lessons-learned-from-a-christmas-carol-as-presented-by-justin-pari-tickets-126478164595>

A Conversation on Grief & the 2020 Holiday Season from Oasis Counseling

Tue, Dec 8, 12PM

The holiday season can be tough, especially this year with so many changes in our typical routines, celebrations and gatherings. Grief is a normal response that comes from feeling loss or sorrow after a challenging event or from losing someone or some things that give us comfort and stability. Please join Forge and our partners at Oasis Counseling for a conversation on grief and techniques for coping and finding peace this season. This event is free but requires registration.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-conversation-on-grief-the-2020-holiday-season-tickets-127713371131?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

INSPIRATION

30 days of gratitude

#1 What smell are you grateful for today?	#2 What technology are you grateful for?	#3 What color are you grateful for?
#4 What food are you most grateful for?	#5 What sound are you grateful for today?	#6 What in nature are you grateful for?
#7 What memory are you grateful for?	#8 What book are you most grateful for?	#9 What place are you most grateful for?
#10 What taste are you grateful for today?	#11 What holiday are you grateful for?	#12 What texture are you grateful for?
#13 What abilities are you grateful for?	#14 What sight are you grateful for today?	#15 What season are you grateful for?
#16 What about your body are you grateful for?	#17 What knowledge are you grateful for?	#18 What piece of art are you grateful for?
#19 What touch are you grateful for today?	#20 Who in your life are you grateful for?	#21 What song are you most grateful for?
#22 What story are you grateful for?	#23 What tradition are you grateful for?	#24 What challenge are you grateful for?
#25 What moment this week are you most grateful for?	#26 What form of expression are you most grateful for?	#27 What small thing that you use daily are you grateful for?
#28 What small thing that happened today are you grateful for?	#29 What friend/family member are you grateful for today?	#30 What talent or skill do you have that you are grateful for?

Text prompts courtesy of www.TextMyJournal.com

Can you accept the challenge of 30 Days of Gratitude?

We would love to hear your answers! Please be in touch.

THE MONTHLY PUZZLE

A Season for Connection: We're Here for Each Other

T N S C Z A N K U E V G Q K R
 S N T E B W R G G L I J S Y N
 D P E V R L V N J V L Y K S J
 U M T M Q E E Y I X N S L C B
 E P O H E L N N O K O H D D E
 W P J T L T G I F J I A G M Q
 M D A A L W I P T Y S R A I Z
 Z T H Z T K G C G Y S I Y E K
 V C N Z N A K Z X U A N Q L K
 R E S I L I E N T E P G A Q U
 G N I T R O P P U S M S M J K
 S G Y Z E Q Y Y O T O E X A O
 Y Z U F J Z N G Z E C C M U S
 T U F J F O R B H X Z G Q N M
 Z S N C T C S P A A C M O A L

CHALLENGE
 COMPASSION
 EXCITEMENT
 GIVING
 HOPE

JOY
 RESILIENT
 SERENITY
 SHARING
 SUPPORTING

If you are struggling with mental health issues, you may benefit from being with others who have similar experiences. Intentional Peer Support is about making and sustaining mutually supportive relationships. When people are mutual partners in a relationship, there is equality; one person is not the “helper” to the other, both benefit and can support each other working toward what we want in life. It is a positive, hope-based approach, helping us to determine actions we can take to reach our goals.



CPSC is open to everyone 18 and older seeking support in pursuing mental health wellness with an emphasis on hope and recovery.

All services are free and no referral is required.

Warmline telephone support, staffed by trained peers, available 8:30 AM- 10 PM Monday through Friday and 5-10 PM Saturdays and Sundays: 603-427-6966

Connections Peer Support Center

544 Islington St.

Portsmouth, NH 03801