



2021
ANNUAL REPORT

 *Access*

 *Quality*

 *Impact*

NORTHWESTERN
COUNSELING
& SUPPORT SERVICES
we're here for you

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Our Mission

*is to ensure that the residents
of Franklin and Grand Isle
Counties have access to high
quality services, which promote healthy
living and emotional well-being.*



Dear Friends,

We are excited to share our FY2021 Annual Report with the theme of **Access • Quality • Impact**. As the pandemic continues to disrupt all facets of life, the past year has certainly presented numerous challenges in delivering quality services. As demonstrated over the years, as the needs of the community have changed, so have the programs offered within our three service divisions at Northwestern Counseling & Support Services. During FY2021, NCSS served 3,830 people in our offices, in the local schools, via telephonic and videoconferencing platforms, in the community, in their homes and in their places of work.

NCSS offers services from birth to death within our 15 locations and, also within our community partners' locations across the region. Just a few of the ways NCSS services are woven into the fabric of the community include clinicians embedded within our local primary care offices, emergency department, and area schools. In addition, our employment teams are working hard to strengthen relationships and secure meaningful employment for the people we serve. Successful employment benefits not only the people we serve but strengthens local businesses. Collaborations with our local partners increases access to care and ultimately improves outcomes.

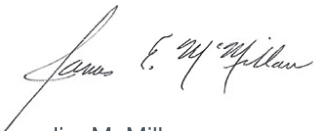
The past year has challenged us. However, we adapted, maintained safety, and ensured that our community had access to the care they needed. As the State of Emergency has been lifted, we have an opportunity to learn from our experience and incorporate those lessons into our mission, values, and priorities.

With COVID-19 changing daily life as we knew it, NCSS worked closely with our community partners to meet additional needs helping to distribute school meals, providing mental health support to people housed in hotels, and increased outreach with law enforcement. The use of technology ranging from telehealth, videoconferencing, and telephonic has played a key role in keeping people safe while addressing their emotional well-being during these uncertain times.

We are very proud of our team and the work they do and are excited to highlight their work in this year's annual report. We are honored to have such strong relationships with our community partners. Together we are making a difference in the lives of the people we serve.

NCSS... we're here for you.

Sincerely,



Jim McMillan
President,
NCSS Board of Directors



Todd Bauman
NCSS Executive Director



Leadership Team

Executive Director
Todd Bauman

Finance Director / CFO
Derek Hoy

Medical Director
Steve Sobel, M.D.

Operations Director / COO
Kim McClellan

Behavioral Health Services Director
Stephen Broer, Psy.D.

Human Resources Director
Stacey Remillard

Children, Youth & Family Services Director
Danielle Mitchell

Community Relations Director
Joe Halko

Director of Developmental Services
Samantha Thomas

Board of Directors

Jim McMillan, President
Carl Rosenquist,
Vice President
Angela Poirier, Treasurer
Sara B. Kittell, Secretary
Jason Minor,
Member at Large
Elaine Carpenter

Betty Charron
Ken Gagne
Rob Hirss
David Hutchinson
David MacCallum
Meg Marshall
Tony Treanor

Standing Committees

Behavioral Health Services

Steve Broer
Deana Chase
Malina Gonnella
Raymond Halstead
Rob Hirss
Evelyn Lavallee
Keith Martell
Geoff McLam
Troy Parah
Linda Rollo
Jennifer Spagnuolo
Lisette Vaillancourt
Anjanette Watson

Developmental Services

Nancy Coles
Jon Fitzgerald
Kenneth Gagne
Josh Hayes
Meghan Lamoureux
Randy Lizotte
Heather Raymond
Cory Savage
Amber Schaeffler
Samantha Thomas
Owen Voss

Children, Youth & Family Services

Elaine Carpenter
Gillian Ireland
Danielle Mitchell
Jodi Pickel
Lisa Whittemore

Years of Service Milestones

5 Years

Brooke Benoit
Jon Blais
Jessica Branon
Rebecca Chaplin
Jase Chevrier
Keely Doe
Coretta Enos
Markus Fankhauser
Anna Harrington
Adelaide Hornick
Lynn Jacques
Elaine Jones
Brandy Kittell
Tammy Leombruno
Danielle Long
Rhonda Loyer
Meaghan Malboeuf
Erica Martel
April Mathieu
Gale Morong
Samantha Ovitt
Jason Slater
Amanda Snyder
Rebecca Strock
Porsche Trombley
Chelsea Vanslette
Matthew Williams
Andrea Yandow

Cheri Keith
Randy Lizotte
Colleen Pastina
Samantha Price
Chad Sandvil
Amber Schaeffler
Nicholas Tebbetts
Iain White
Craig Wright

15 Years

Amanda Clary
Amy Irish
Jennifer Ladue
Claire Thompson
Heather Wilson

20 Years

Eric Barrer
Raeleen Bedard
Belinda Bessette
Matthew Habedank
Carrie Hatch
Vicki Menard
Dorcus Pelissier
Samantha Thomas

25 Years

Merry Hill

10 Years

John Chittick
Stephen Cousino
Heather Getty
Ryan Greeno
Melissa Grismore

30 Years

Sylvia Garrison
John O'Neill
Stacey Steady

NCSS VALUES

- Safety
- Responsiveness
- Compassion
- Integrity

Years of service based on calendar year Jan. – Dec. 2021

New Members

Congratulations to our new members of the Leadership team:



Medical Director
Steve Sobel, M.D.



Finance Director / CFO
Derek Hoy



Director of Developmental Services
Samantha Thomas

Welcome to our new Board of Directors:



Ken Gagne
Developmental
Services Advocate



Angela Poirier
SVP, Chief Loan Specialist
Peoples Trust Company

This Annual Report reflects a portion of the dedication and time NCSS and its staff provided the community during fiscal year 2021.



Tribute to Ted Mable (1944 – 2021)

We were very saddened to report that Ted Mable, former Executive Director of NCSS from 1998 – 2017, passed away at 7:30pm on April 22, 2021 at The Arbors. Near the end of his life, Ted had received outstanding care from their staff and UVM Home and Health and Hospice.

Ted passed away comfortably and at peace as light jazz music played in the background. Ted had such a tremendous impact on the vision and culture of the organization as NCSS continued to meet the expanding needs of the community. So much that the Mable Conference Room and the building itself, the Ted Mable Family Center, are named in his honor.

Ted had a long and successful career that was anchored in a strong desire to help improve the quality of life of his fellow Vermonters. Ted held multiple teaching and leadership positions in the public-school systems in and around northern Vermont then moved onto an adjunct professor position at St. Michael's College in their administration and management graduate program. In 1982, Ted moved from education to State Government when he accepted a

position as the Deputy Secretary of the Agency of Human Services for the State of Vermont and later the Director of Policy Planning and Research. In 1998, Ted was named Executive Director of Northwestern Counseling & Support Services, the role that he held until his retirement in 2017. Ted was passionate about mental health, community development, leadership, and also served as a mentor to many new leaders moving up in the nonprofit sector. Under Ted's leadership NCSS became known as a leader and innovator among the ten Designated Agencies throughout Vermont.



Services Provided by NCSS

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

EMERGENCY & CRISIS STABILIZATION SERVICES

- 24 Hour Emergency & Crisis Stabilization
- Walk-In Crisis Services
- Mobile Outreach Services
- Rapid Access
- Bay View Crisis Care Center (administered by CRT program)
- National Suicide Lifeline (Responds to calls for Vermont)

OUTPATIENT COUNSELING FOR ADULTS, COUPLES & FAMILIES

- Individual, Couples and Family Counseling (children, youth & adults)
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy Program for Teens & Adults
- Elder Outreach Services
- Reach Up Provider at Reach-Up Office
- Co-occurring Counseling (Mental Health & Substance Use)
- Court Ordered Guardianship Evaluations

INTEGRATED HEALTH SERVICES

(located in Primary Care & Specialty Practices)

- Health Assessment & Screenings
- Care Coordination
- Brief Therapy
- Wellness Counseling & Wellness Groups
- Consultation with Medical Providers

COMMUNITY REHABILITATION AND TREATMENT (CRT) SERVICES

- Recovery and Peer Support
- Therapeutic Residence and Transitional Housing
- Community Support Team
- Intensive Case Management Team
- Employment Services Team

PSYCHIATRY & NURSING SERVICES

- Provider to all three Service Divisions (Behavioral Health, Developmental Services & Children, Youth & Families)
- Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation Program
- Evaluation & Consultation Services

EVIDENCED BASED PRACTICES

Programs continually examine ways to learn and implement established and emerging evidenced based practices. Some of these practices include:

Wellness Recovery & Action Planning (WRAP), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Collaborative Assessment & Management of Suicide, CBT for Insomnia, Acceptance & Commitment Therapy, CBT for Chronic Pain, Wellness Self-Management (WSM), Seeking Safety to address trauma and substance use, and Blueprint Health Conditions Wellness Groups.

ZERO SUICIDE PROJECTS

For the past 6 years NCSS has been one of the first pilot sites in Vermont to examine ways to prevent suicide through a range of initiatives within NCSS and in the community.

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

FAMILY AND HOME-BASED SERVICES

- Family Assessment and Support
- Family Support/Home Visiting
- Applied Behavior Services

SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES

- Collaborative Achievement Team (CAT Program)
- School-based Autism Program
- School-based Clinician Program
- School-based Behavior Consultation
- Home School Coordination

COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

- Respite
- Community Support Services
- Skill Building/Support Groups
- Resource Specialists

CLINICAL OUTPATIENT SERVICES

- Individual and group therapy for children, youth, and families
- Substance Abuse Assessment & Treatment

ADOLESCENT SERVICES

- Transitional Living Program
- JOBS Program
- Youth for Change

SOAR LEARNING CENTER

- Alternative Education and Day Treatment Program

PARENT CHILD CENTER SERVICES

- Early Intervention Services including Developmental Screening
- Children's Integrated Services
- Early Childhood and Family Mental Health Services
- Family and Childcare Support Services
- Mental Health Consultation
- Parents as Teachers
- HEART Program
- Childcare Financial Assistance Program
- On-site Occupational Therapy

DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

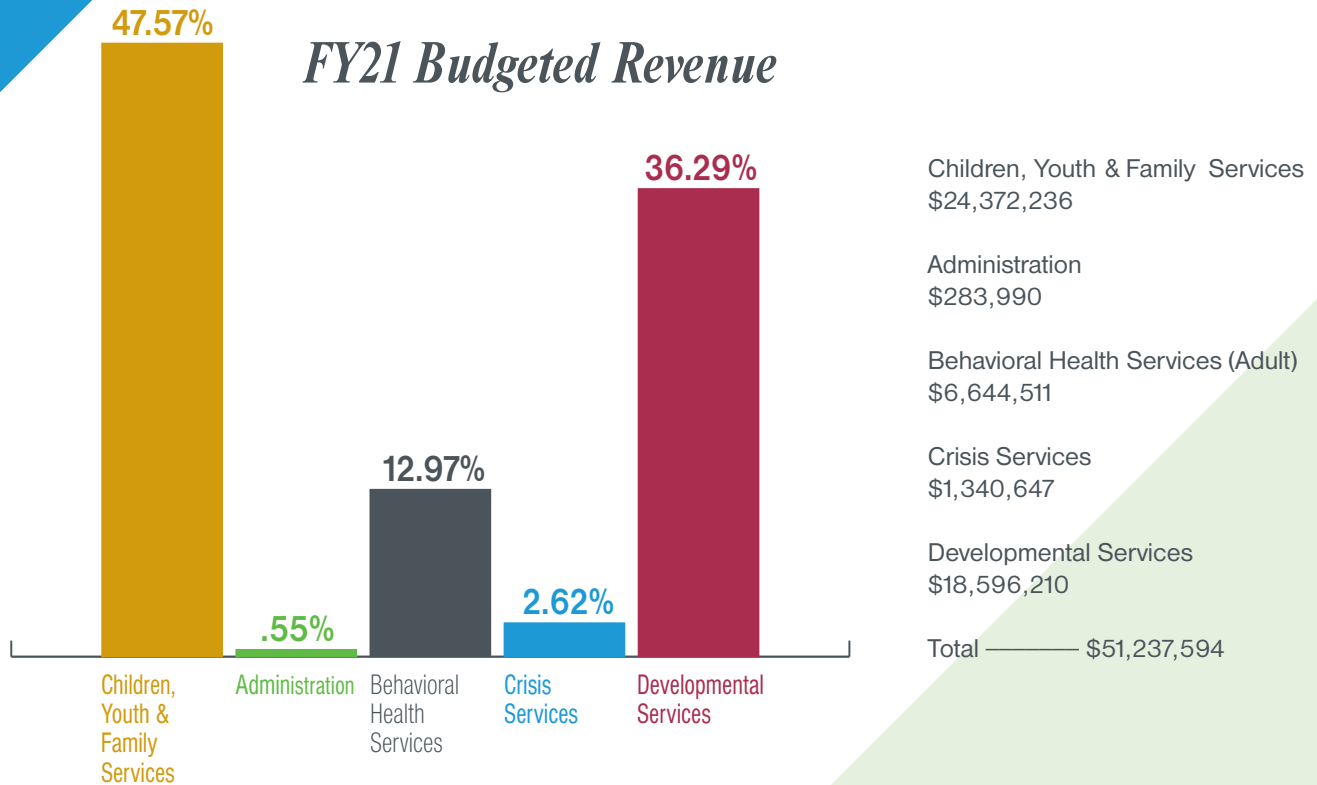
- Alternative Education Program
- Adult Services, including Life Skill Classes and Continuing Education
- Seniors Services
- Employment Services
- Residential and Support Services
- Unique Program for Adaptive & Expressive Arts - PAEA
- 24 Hour Crisis Services
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
- American Sign Language (ASL) Instruction
- Traumatic Brain Injury Program (TBI)
- Emergency Respite Services
- Residential Services
- Dialectical Behavior
- Therapy Support Team
- Clinical Counseling & Support Team
- Academy of Learning
- Professional Peer Advocacy Services
- Peer Self Advocate Program
- Specialized Case Management Services
- Core Transition Team Planning - moving from children to adult services seamlessly



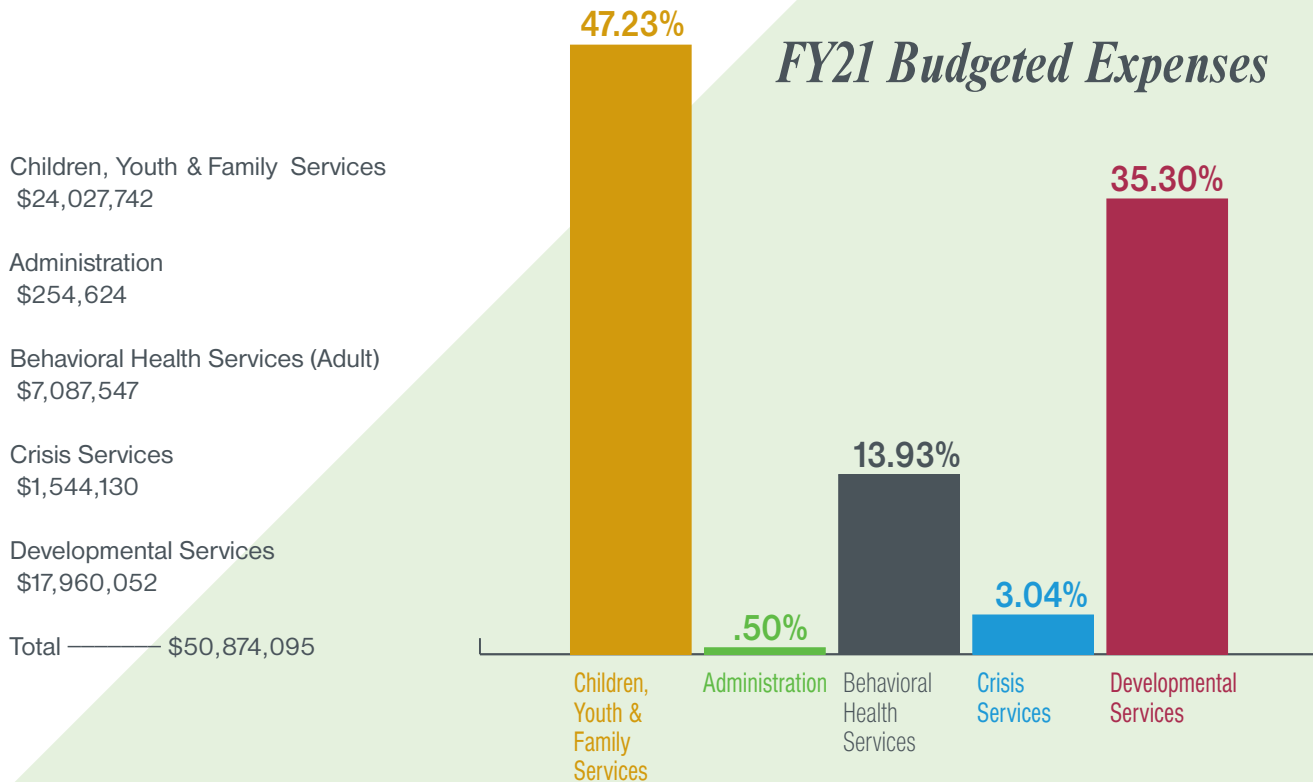
Financials

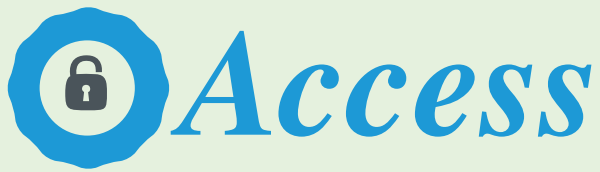
BUDGETED AGENCY REVENUE & EXPENSES • • • • • JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2021

FY21 Budgeted Revenue



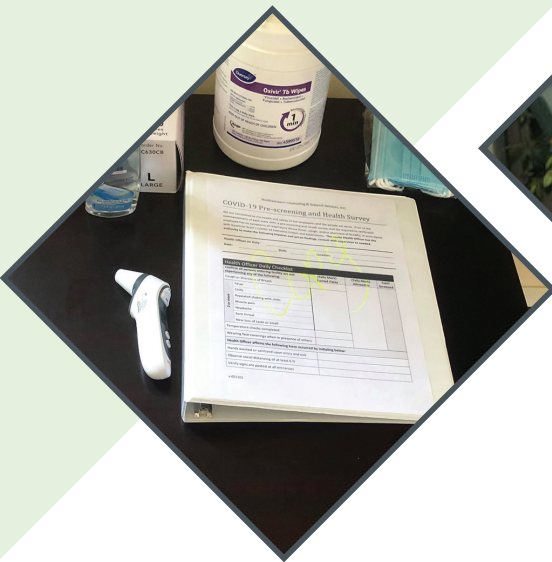
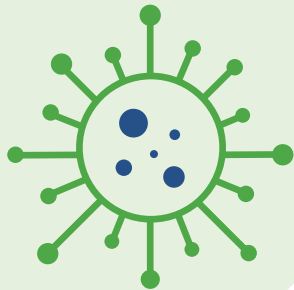
FY21 Budgeted Expenses





Staff and Client Safety During COVID

Safety is our number one value. As the pandemic continued throughout the year it was imperative for NCSS to ensure the safety of our staff and everyone that we serve in the community. We continued to follow and adjusted to the protocols put in place by the Vermont Department of Health and the CDC.



*"Thank you for all you do and
your hard work during the
pandemic."*

- FY21 Client Satisfaction Survey comment

2021 VIRTUAL AUTISM AWARENESS WEEK

An innovative week of connection, acceptance, and fun!

Shawna Shappy & Megan Gargano (School Based Autism Team Leaders)

A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

When schools closed their doors in March 2020, the School Based Autism Team had to quickly shift gears; accessing alternative spaces at the agency and in the community to continue to safely provide in-person services to their school aged clients who were unable to access remote learning.

Unfortunately, for the first time in 6 years, the Annual Autism Walk held during Autism Awareness month in April each year also had to be canceled in 2020.

With the continuation of the pandemic far beyond what any of us imagined, the Autism Walk Committee, comprised of the School Based Autism Team and ABS Program, got creative and collaborated on what turned out to be the biggest and best Autism Awareness event ever held! And so was born the first ever Virtual Autism Awareness Week! Not just one day, but an entire week!

VIRTUAL EVENTS

The event began on Saturday, April 3, 2021 with a socially distanced drive-thru kickoff event where members of the Autism Walk Committee created and distributed 100 goodie bags to families in the community. The bags were filled with Autism resources, Autism Walk t-shirts and hats, and all of the necessary materials for families to participate in the upcoming events from the comfort of their homes.

Three virtual events were held every day throughout the week of April 5th; everything from story hours and sing-alongs, to parent trainings, a puppet show and a GoNoodle dance party, live arts and crafts, and an unforgettable debut of NCSS' newest member of the School Based Autism Team – Sal the Science Gal in a comedic step by step sensory science theater for kids! Events were streamed live on NCSS' Facebook page and/or accessed via live Zoom calls throughout the week.



STAYING CONNECTED

It would have been easy to cancel the Autism Awareness Walk for the second year in a row. Instead, the passion for the work that is being done in our community by these amazing teams, and the importance of staying connected and raising awareness for acceptance of those families impacted by Autism and other Developmental Disabilities everyday, inspired this very uplifting week during a time when we needed it the most. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and we hope to adopt components of this incredible event as the future of Autism Awareness at NCSS!



Ensuring Children and Adults Have Access to Nutritious Meals and Snacks

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federal program that provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children and adults who are enrolled for care at participating child care centers, day care homes, and adult day care centers. CACFP also provides reimbursements for meals served to children and youth participating in after school care programs, children residing in emergency shelters, and adults over the age of 60 or living with a disability and enrolled in day care facilities.

In June 2021, the highest month during this fiscal year, the NCSS Sponsorship of the Child and Adult Care Food Program had 50 active registered child care homes with over 470 enrolled children. Collectively, for the month, the program served 17,622 meals. This consisted of 5,572 breakfasts, 5,581 lunches, and 6,353 snacks! Through the NCSS Sponsorship, these programs were collectively reimbursed over \$27,000 for the month from a combination of state and federal dollars for the meals provided to families in Franklin, Grand Isle, and 5 Chittenden county homes.

50
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Over
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Served
17,622
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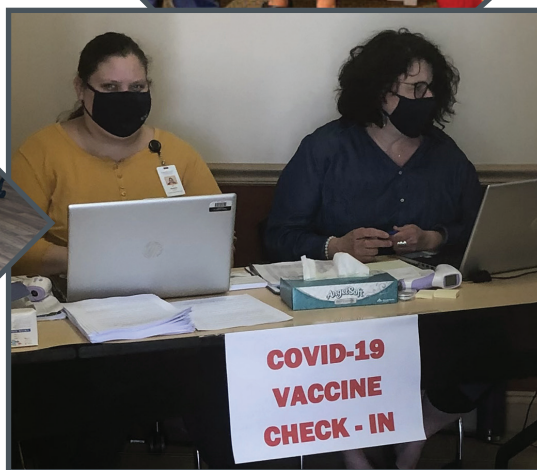
Staff Ice Cream Social With Safety In Mind

The Behavioral Health division didn't let the pandemic interrupt their annual Staff Ice Cream Social. Creativity resulted in a drive-thru event held in the parking lot of the Ted Mable Family Center. Staff were able to drive up and receive a pint of Ben & Jerry's. Another example of adapting to the circumstances presented by the pandemic to ensure safety while maintaining an annual tradition.



Vaccinating People Served

During March 2021, NCSS partnered with the NOTCH to host a vaccine clinic for Developmental Services clients and their Shared Living Providers. The Mable Conference Room at the Ted Mable Family Center was turned into the vaccination site with the Nursing staff facilitating the clinic. The clinic was initiated to support and reduce behaviors. In addition to consumers that we serve individuals from other counties attended who otherwise would not have been able to receive the vaccine.



Reducing Suicide Deaths Takes a Community

As seen in Vermont Digger

On Nov. 30, 2018, AJ Holzscheiter took his own life.

He was just 18 years old.

AJ wasn't alone. In fact, the following year, which is the most current confirmed data available, 109 Vermonters took their own lives.

Those deaths occurred across all ages and incomes.

According to the Vermont Department of Health the 2019 suicide death rate was 15.3 per 100,000 people, which is down from 2018 which was 18.8 per 100,000. "This is encouraging but just like with the national data, we can't say yet whether it's going to turn into a trend. We don't have the preliminary suicide death data for 2020 in Vermont yet. 2019 was similar to previous years in terms of who died by suicide, with males dying about 4 times more often than females, and most of the people were over age 25.", noted Tom Delaney, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, UVM Larner College of Medicine.

Read more... [Link to article:](https://vtdigger.org/sponsored_content/reducing-suicide-deaths-takes-a-community/)

https://vtdigger.org/sponsored_content/reducing-suicide-deaths-takes-a-community/



Sponsor Spotlight

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Why Vermonters are Struggling to Find Help with Mental Health Care

BURLINGTON, Vt. (WCAX) - More Vermonters than ever before are asking for help with their mental health. WCAX reporter, Christina Guessferd, looks at how the pandemic has put more strain on the system.

At Northwestern Counseling & Support Services in Franklin County, while the list isn't as long— an average one-to-two-week wait— their resources are severely limited.

"We can meet with someone, however, to get the quality of care that they're looking for, we're just not equipped enough to do that right now," said Danielle Mitchell, the director of children, youth and family services at Northwestern Counseling & Support Services.

"We could get you in pretty quick. To see you every week would probably be a stretch," said Dr. Steve Broer, the director of behavioral health services at Northwestern Counseling & Support Services.

Mitchell and Broer say that's because their caseloads are practically unmanageable due to the extraordinarily high demand for one-on-one sessions.

Link to entire WCAX segment:

<https://www.wcax.com/2021/05/13/why-vermonters-are-struggling-to-find-help-with-mental-health-care/>

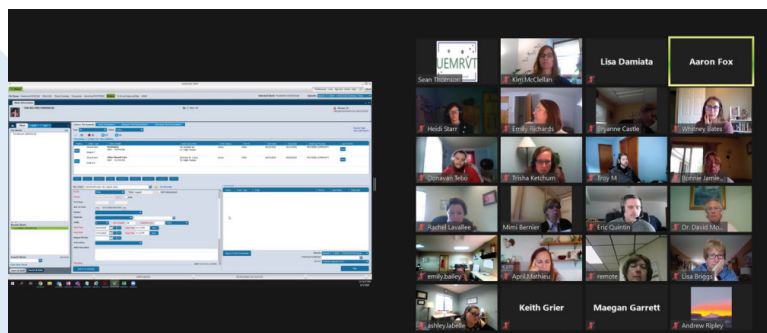


Unified Electronic Medical Record Launched

On September 1, 2020 NCSS was the first of the UEMRVT agencies to Go-Live with our new Unified EMR, myAvatar. The first week of the roll-out was successful, with EMR vendor Netsmart quoting "this is one of the best roll-outs we've had in a long time." The weeks to follow showed promise. However, this new platform did provide challenges for staff as a result of NCSS being the first agency to transition to myAvatar. The next agency in the group, United Counseling Services of Bennington, went live during October.

As the calendar turned to January 2021 the UEMRVT group, which includes United Counseling Services of Bennington (UCS), Lamoille County Mental Health Services (LCMHS), and Washington County Mental Health Services (WCMHS), in addition to NCSS, are all live in myAvatar. This prompted an opportunity to begin optimization. Locally at NCSS, we implemented a process to pull together sub-committees with Subject Matter Experts in order to gather

information about concerns, workflow challenges, and suggestions to improve the system and client care.



UEMRVT group meets over Zoom to continue reviewing myAvatar platform.



Meeting Service Delivery Challenges During a Year of COVID-19

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

COVID & Services - Since the initial weeks of COVID, much of the division has maintained face to face contact options in different ways: all 4 of our Residential Programs, Community & Rehabilitation Treatment (CRT) Case Management Services, Crisis, Mobile Outreach, Integrated Health and Nursing. Throughout the year we've continued to review ways to increase direct client care in safe ways for all concerned.

The Integrated Health Team provides services in primary and specialty care settings and has been doing mostly remote work. Staff gradually returned to practices as they start to offer more on-site support.

The Outpatient team has been maintaining connection with clients through a steady demand for telehealth services. The team has also been very creative in ways of staying connected from remote locations. In addition, our proposal

to the Department of Mental Health to address the needs of older Vermonters during COVID through our Elder Outreach program was funded.

Division leadership was actively involved in planning efforts across the agency for vaccine distribution and support efforts with expanding vaccination for different age groups among the individuals we serve.

The Department of Mental Health invited NCSS Crisis Services to submit a budget for how we will continue the expanded 988 National Suicide Lifeline after September 2021. It is anticipated the volume will increase significantly with the release of the 988 number scheduled for July 2022 nationwide.



CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

- Focus on early intervention to support younger children
 - Increase number of weekly service hours for this population
 - Provide Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) consultation to other teams to support clients who transitioned from program, but were still in need of services
- Face-to-face services throughout the pandemic
- Telehealth services
 - Increased access to parents and consultation hours
 - Allowed for treatment when face-to-face was not an option
 - Increased collaboration with outside service providers
- Collaborate with other teams to ensure families had needed resources (i.e., internet or other technology)
- Soar Learning Center revamped school and transportation schedules
 - Hybrid models for care easier for some to access treatment (transportation not a barrier)
- Started a perinatal storytelling series
- Utilized agency and Richford Hall when schools go remote
- Redefining discharge criteria to increase access to services to more acute referrals and decrease wait list time
- Increased transportation for clients when needed, including when school buses were not operational
- Use of technology to provide remote services when needed
- Started a statewide perinatal grief/loss coalition
- Started mothers and babies' groups
- Started MOMs (meeting other moms) social connections group
- Became the diaper bank for the region
- Starting rounds at the birthing center at Northwestern Medical Center

DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

During one of the Governor's updates in July 2020, Developmental Services was allowed to begin considering and implementing one on one services only at this time. We are not able to provide any group services. All Service Coordinators completed a re-entry assessment for each individual served on their case load. This assessment takes into consideration the risk factors of health, environment, contacts, home situation, work, etc. It will be approved by the individual and treatment team, including the guardian, to be sure everyone is in agreement on the plan to begin providing community services again.

Schaeffler Guest at the VATB Forum

Amber Schaeffler, Developmental Services Clinical Program Manager, was interviewed as a guest at a forum held by the Vermont Association of the Deaf to discuss mental health during COVID, accessibility of services for the deaf and developmental services. You can watch the interview at the link below. You will want to hit closed captioning if you do not sign so you can read the interview.

https://link.zixcentral.com/u/f8b9a06e/antK_iUE6x-G7E5zShnsoMg?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DgOhyxjwcR-c



VERMONT ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF



Maintaining a Connection Through Zoom

Zoom groups were established during COVID (exercise, chair yoga, games, bingo). A kick-off for these groups occurred on December 18th and was an open time for clients to get familiar using zoom. The hour zoom was focused on gathering to spread holiday cheer. Everyone was smiling, laughing, singing carols, sharing their wishes, and really enjoying themselves. All of the groups began during January 2021. Many of the individuals we serve greatly benefited from these opportunities.

The Zoom group called "Lunch Social Hour" occurs every Friday from 12-1. All DS staff, clients, shared living providers, and respite providers are invited to the social hour free of charge. We started with a small group, which grew into a much larger group. In addition to socializing at this time, we have had NCSS staff involved to sing and play music for the group too.

As a result of this initiative a shared living provider reached out saying the following: "I just want to take a moment to say thank you for offering and supporting the new zoom times with clients and others. I believe it has made a difference in the life of the person that lives in our home and for myself as well. To finally be able to connect with his peers and staff at the agency (safely) has been uplifting and gives a new promise of life somewhat as we once knew it."

Additional examples of maintaining care for individuals served:

- Academy of Learning drop in times
- Staff worked throughout COVID stay home stay safe order
 - Residential staff
 - Med runs, in home supports, grocery shopping, support at medical appointments
 - Some community supports continued as placements would have been disrupted without the supports
- Berry Hill was opened to support cross divisional needs i.e., Children, Youth & Family clients

We lost only one home related to COVID reasons!



School based Autism Team – Spring 2021. This was their first gathering in-person during the spring in a long time.

Quality

2021 CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

NOTE:

As a result of COVID-19 surveys were mailed instead of hand delivered which disrupted returns and resulted in lower response rate.

Staff treated me with respect

97%

I received services that were right for me

88%

The services that I received made a difference

89%

Deployment of Laptops

Our Technology team performed above and beyond with new equipment that came into the agency with COVID-19 funds. The team received about 35 iPads for client use and 125 laptops for our staff, all of which needed to be setup with security, software and added to inventory before they could be distributed. This is the largest number of laptops that they have handled in one shipment and in such a small window of time. Kudos to the Finance team for successfully obtaining COVID funds and to the Technology team for taking on this project with such dedication. Remote connectivity has become even greater as a result of the pandemic.



Vibrant Provides NCSS with 988 State Planning Grant

As seen in *vermont biz*

Northwestern Counseling & Support Services, Inc. (NCSS) was pleased to announce it has received the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's 988 State Planning Grant through Vibrant Emotional Health, the nonprofit administrator of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

"The Crisis Team at NCSS currently picks up National Suicide Lifeline calls for the state of Vermont several hours each day and weekends. A quick and simple 988 number will help callers access help quicker and also normalize the experience of seeking mental health support as they would for a medical emergency when they dial 911." stated Dr. Steve Broer, Director of Behavioral Health Services, NCSS.



Link to entire press release:

[https://vermontbiz.com/news/2021/february/14/vibrant-provides-northwestern-counseling-988-state-planning-grant?ct=t\(SUNDAY ENEWS 2 14 2021\)](https://vermontbiz.com/news/2021/february/14/vibrant-provides-northwestern-counseling-988-state-planning-grant?ct=t(SUNDAY%20ENEWS%2021%2021))

"Saved my life. Literally! Thank you - :)."

- FY21 Client Satisfaction Survey comment

Lt. Governor Molly Gray's 'Recover Stronger' Tour in St. Albans

As seen in the St. Albans Messenger: print and digital platforms

By Kate Barcellos, Messenger Staff Writer

ST ALBANS — Lieutenant Governor Molly Gray visited St. Albans during June 2021 on her “Recover Stronger” tour and spoke with local town and city officials and leaders at Northwestern Counseling & Support Services about plans to help struggling Vermonters and their communities moving forward.

“Each week, we are spending a day in a county just to listen to Vermonters,” Gray said. “To meet communities, community leaders, nonprofit leaders, business leaders where they’re at. To figure out what are our lessons learned? What do we need to do differently coming out of the pandemic?”

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH ON YOUR TOUR?

“Our plan is, at the end of the summer to put together a concrete list of priorities –be it telehealth, regular access to broadband and childcare at home for a lot of Vermonters... we have to invest in equitable, quality, affordable childcare...until we figure out how to pay childcare providers enough, make sure that there are enough childcare providers and make sure childcare is fully affordable and accessible, we are going to have communities and families that are in crisis.”

WHO IN THE WORKFORCE HAVE BEEN IMPACTED THE WORST BY COVID?

“Women have been disproportionately impacted,” Gray said. “Women have left the workforce at a higher rate here in Vermont than nationally...families have had to choose between staying in the workforce or leaving the workforce to care for children.”

“We’ve had a hard time filling all of our positions in part because people can’t come back,” said Todd Bauman, Executive Director at NCSS. “Because they need to be home with their kids because they don’t have access to quality childcare.”

“A lot of our families have historically struggled with poverty,” said Danielle Mitchell, Director of Children, Youth & Family Services division. “We have a lot of our families that

are migrant workers, and because of a lot of the politics and policies in place who (may not be able to) access our services. We’re looking at families who have been impacted by trauma. All of these are just different populations that are even more impacted by COVID.”

WHAT COULD THE FUTURE OF FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND CHILDCARE LOOK LIKE?

“I think it’s (about) taking models like NCSS...ensuring families have access to food, to childcare, to mental health and support services and being an integrative one-stop-shop where families can go,” Gray said. “This is the model that works in Vermont, but we have to set up a funding stream that isn’t year-to-year. That doesn’t work. It has to be a long-term, consistent funding stream that allows NCSS and other providers to thrive and to plan for the future.”

Segment seen on WPTZ – NBC Channel 5 news with reporter Brianna Borghi also included the stop at NCSS.

Link to entire WPTZ segment:

<https://www.mynbc5.com/article/pandemic-recovery-efforts-underway-in-franklin-county/36895857>



Appearing on WCAX

VERMONT STATE POLICE UTILIZE COMFORT DOG IN DE-ESCALATION SITUATIONS

Excerpts from the video segment...

ST. ALBANS, Vt. (WCAX) - Dogs are helping bridge the gap between police officers and mental health agencies.

The Vermont State Police barracks in Saint Albans currently has five dogs, but one dog has found a way to help in ways other police dogs can't.

"He's not a law enforcement dog, he's not fully a therapy dog," said Nicholas Tebbetts with Northwestern Counseling & Support Services.

Tebbetts is a clinician and crisis specialist embedded with Vermont State Police since 2016. His partner is four-legged Cooper, a highly trained working dog whose job is to respond to any situation that could be thrown his way.

NCSS is a part of a statewide mental health network and could expand to other police departments.

The now retired lieutenant who started this program says it's the most beneficial program he's been affiliated with since joining Vermont State Police.



Retired Lt. Maurice Lamonthe says a team like this could help fill a crisis worker role in police departments.

Since the clinician embedded program began in 2016, NCSS reports 45% of scene responses with a clinician have resulted in mental health referrals and additional outreach, as opposed to an arrest or more tragic outcome.

Link to segment: <https://www.wcax.com/video/2020/08/06/vermont-state-police-benefit-comfort-dog/>

Meeting Service Delivery Challenges During a Year of COVID-19

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Community Rehabilitation & Treatment's (CRT) Employment Team Recognized

The Community Rehabilitation & Treatment's (CRT) Employment Team was recognized by the Vermont Department of Mental Health for employing the greatest number of clients during the first quarter of FY21 (July - September 2020) of the 11 organizations with programs in the state.

21.3% of NCSS' 160 CRT clients served were employed with an average wage of \$3,636 during the quarter. During the same period, the average for all organizations state-wide was 10.8% and \$3,208, respectively.

21.3%
of NCSS'
CRT clients
employed

ASSISTING NORTHWESTERN MEDICAL CENTER STAFF WITH DE-ESCALATION STRATEGIES

The Crisis staff provided training to the Northwestern Medical Center Emergency Department staff on strategies to understand and de-escalate situations involving individuals in mental health crisis. We have also responded to a training request from the Progressive Care Unit on the same topic based on increased demands the hospital is experiencing.



Meeting Service Delivery Challenges During a Year of COVID-19 *continued*

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Early Intervention Program expands to Chittenden County - NCSS works with Howard Center to ensure seamless program transition

During the month of May 2020 (prior to the end of FY 2020), the Parent Child Center of NCSS submitted a proposal to deliver



Early Intervention (EI) services in Chittenden County. The PCC of NCSS' proposal was accepted and we were awarded oversight of the EI-Chittenden program. Early Intervention is a family-centered system of early intervention, service coordination, developmental education, information, resources and supports for families who have a child, age birth to three, at risk of or experiencing delays in development and/or special health needs. As the EI program provider for Franklin & Grand Isle Counties, we have the experience, resources, and knowledge to effectively support a robust program in an adjoining region. We have spent years focused on continuous quality improvement ensuring our model is the most effective in meeting the needs of children and families. We developed a strong transition team to move the process along. The PCC of NCSS worked alongside Howard Center and their Chittenden County leadership team to ensure a seamless program transition.

The Chittenden County transition process proceeded forward and in early August 2020, the Parent Child Center of NCSS began accepting all new referrals for the program. Early Intervention staff and PCC leadership supported the transition of new clients to NCSS. We hired 5 new staff starting at the end of the month. Most of the new hires are experienced in EI and will transition to the PCC of NCSS with their current clients. This will allow for continuity of care for the families as they transition. We slowly began accepting client files and started serving the full program on September 1st. The full transition of the 225 families to NCSS has been a combined effort by CYF leadership, PCC direct service staff, the administration team and their leadership.

In addition, the Parent Child Center of NCSS is working with national mothers and babies' group to adapt curriculum to support native/indigenous populations.

The Parent Child Center of NCSS is working with national mothers and babies' group to adapt curriculum to support native/indigenous populations.

DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Community Partners to the Rescue

In preparation for colder temperatures of the winter of 2020-2021 the division began exploring large spaces in our community to support community activities. We were graciously gifted space at the Elks Club in St Albans. We are using the space two days each week providing a warm space for direct staff to support their clients engaging in activities to support their goals. We observe all necessary precautions to ensure safety for staff and clients. In addition, Lise Gates from the Dairy Center in Enosburg Falls has been providing space for this past year free of charge.



DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES *continued*

Employment Team

The pandemic certainly impacted the work opportunities for the individuals that the Developmental Services division serves. However, 20 individuals continued to work throughout the pandemic and 25 people returned to work over the year as their employers held their jobs for them. Our employment team is a vital part of ensuring the people we serve have opportunities to contribute to the community and experience the rewards of employment. Being employed is an important component that contributes to the self-esteem of program participants.

25
clients
returned
when it was
safe

20
clients
remained working
during
COVID

Soar Learning Center Outstanding Achievements During 2020-2021 School Year

During the most unconventional of school years the staff of the Soar Learning Center exhibited creativity and resilience to ensure that students continued to receive the services to address their educational and behavioral needs. Although several special events needed to be canceled, one of the more amazing achievements is that, in spite of the pandemic, the school was only closed two days, December 14 and 15, during the school year.

Behavioral data also suggests positive outcomes during an otherwise turbulent school year. The charts below detail the behavior of students during the 2020-2021 school year to be the best when compared to the past three school years.

Additional achievements of note:

- increase in positive behaviors and relationships with staff given 1:1 transportation model
- decrease in need for physical intervention
- steady attendance given altered schedule and times "kids showing up"
- early graduate in Senior class
- four students transitioned back to public school during pandemic

Soar Learning Center

P.O. Box 372 • 173 McInn Drive
St. Albans Bay, VT 05481

A PROGRAM OF

**NORTHWESTERN COUNSELING
& SUPPORT SERVICES**

Soar Learning Center 2020 - 2021 School Calendar											
August (5)				September (21)				October (20)			
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S	Su	M	Tu	W	Th
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	4	7	8	9	10
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30	
30	31										
November (18)				December (17)				January (17)			
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S	Su	M	Tu	W	Th
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	4	7	8	9	10
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	11	14	15	16	17
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	18	19	20	21	22
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	25	26	27	28	29
29	30						31				
February (15)				March (21)				April (17)			
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S	Su	M	Tu	W	Th
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	7	8	9	10	11
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	14	15	16	17	18
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	21	22	23	24	25
29	30						28	29	30	31	
May (19)				June (11)							
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S	Su	M	Tu	W	Th
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30	
30	31										

Total School Days = 181

Holiday/School Closed
 September 21st - Labor Day
 October 12th - Indigenous Peoples Day
 November 25th - 27th - Thanksgiving Break
 December 23rd - January 5th - Holiday Break
 January 18th - MLK Day
 February 22nd - March 2nd - Winter Break
 April 19th - 23rd - Spring Break
 May 24th - Memorial Day

Special Events (Cancelled)
 October 30th - Open House (half-day)
 December 22nd - Holiday Concert (half-day)
 April 24th - Senior Banquet

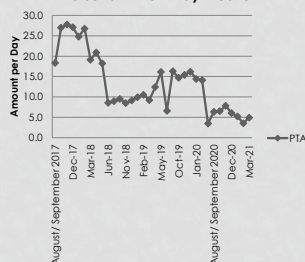
Intervise - No School
 October 30th

First & Last Days of School
 August 25th - 1st Day of School
 June 15th - Tentative Last Day of School

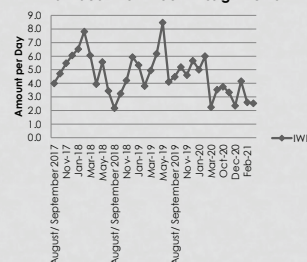
PLEASE NOTE - This calendar is subject to change

AGGREGATE BEHAVIOR DATA

Personal Time Away Breaks



Individual Work Room Assignments



Mental Health First Aid Trainings Enrich Communities

ADULT / YOUTH / TEEN TRAINING CURRICULUMS

The impact of Mental Health First Aid trainings remained steady with primarily utilizing the Zoom videoconferencing platform. Lance Metayer continues to lead NCSS' efforts plus, statewide trainings through Vermont Care Partners.

Included among trainings during FY21 were:

- Adult Mental Health First Aid - 18 agents of the Border Patrol in Richford on September 22 and 23 in which agents were engaged in the training and discussions focused on de-escalation, suicide prevention, accessing services, and self-care. This was the first MHFA training provided to Border Patrol agents in the state. We hope that this will strengthen our working relationship with the Border Patrol
- On December 7th NCSS participated in the first ever statewide teen Mental Health First Aid training of trainers in the state of Vermont. As a result of NCSS' Teen MHFA pilot in 2020, NCSS is providing guidance to the DA network to build a network of teen Mental Health First Aid instructors to train high school students how to recognize and respond to the signs of mental illness and suicide in peers. Fourteen new teen MHFA instructors were certified. There are now five trainers at NCSS - Lance Metayer, Shannon Porter, Coretta Enos, Marissa McFadden and Holly Reed.
- In December, NCSS partnered with SASH to provide an older adult MHFA training series to statewide SASH employees serving older Vermonters. In total we held 6 trainings over the month of December and trained about 60 SASH employees in the MHFA Older Adult Curriculum.
- During January 2021, we trained 50-60 staff at Missisquoi Valley Union (MVU) in the Youth Mental Health First Aid model to help set the ground work for implementing the teen training next year.
- Cori Enos and Lance Metayer provided a teen Mental Health First Aid training to a group of 12 Cold Hollow Career Center medical career students at Enosburg High School. The training took place over three days and was focused on recognizing stigma, increasing positive mental health, and learning skills to support a friend who may be struggling.
- In April, Marissa McFadden and Lance Metayer completed a teen Mental Health First Aid training series with Med Careers students at Northwest Career and Technical Center in St Albans. In total 14 students participated in the training. In addition, 12 students from the Human Services program at Northwest Career and Technical Center received training in mental health stigma awareness and suicide prevention.

14
new teen
MHFA instructors
were certified



First
ever statewide
Teen Mental Health
First Aid
Training

12
Cold Hollow
CC Med Career
students
trained

50+
MVU Staff
trained in the
Youth MHFA
Model

18
Border Patrol
Agents in
Richford
trained



2020 Annual Awards

NCSS honored individuals that make a difference at the FY2020 Annual Meeting & Recognition Night which due to the pandemic was held, via Zoom, on November 4, 2020. NCSS' purpose statement is 'Creating a stronger community, one person at a time.' Each of our award recipients exemplifies this spirit.

MARCHETA TOWNSEND COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARD

Marcheta Townsend Community Partner Award honors individuals from outside the organization who collaborate with NCSS to ensure success.

*John Holzscheiter and Andrea Wells
Afterglow Foundation raises awareness
of suicide and prevention in
our community.*



PARTNER IN EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The Partner in Excellence Award which is intended to be the highest honor the organization can give to one of our employees, for it recognizes staff that are in the top 1% in the organization. These employees exemplify the NCSS values of Safety, Responsiveness, Compassion and Integrity. In addition, they have made a major contribution to a client, to the organization or to the community at large.



Rebecca Chaplin
Social Work Care Coordinator
Behavioral Health Services
Division



Heather Hubbard
Community Support Team Leader
Developmental Services Division



Holly Olio
Residential Operations Service
Coordinator
Behavioral Health Services
Division



Shannon Porter
Intensive Community Support
Service Coordinator
Children, Youth & Family
Services Division

*"The staff at NCSS are exceptional professionals.
From the front desk to the counselors I see, I couldn't
be more pleased. I have been treated like family."*

- FY21 Client Satisfaction Survey comment



Disruption to Staff

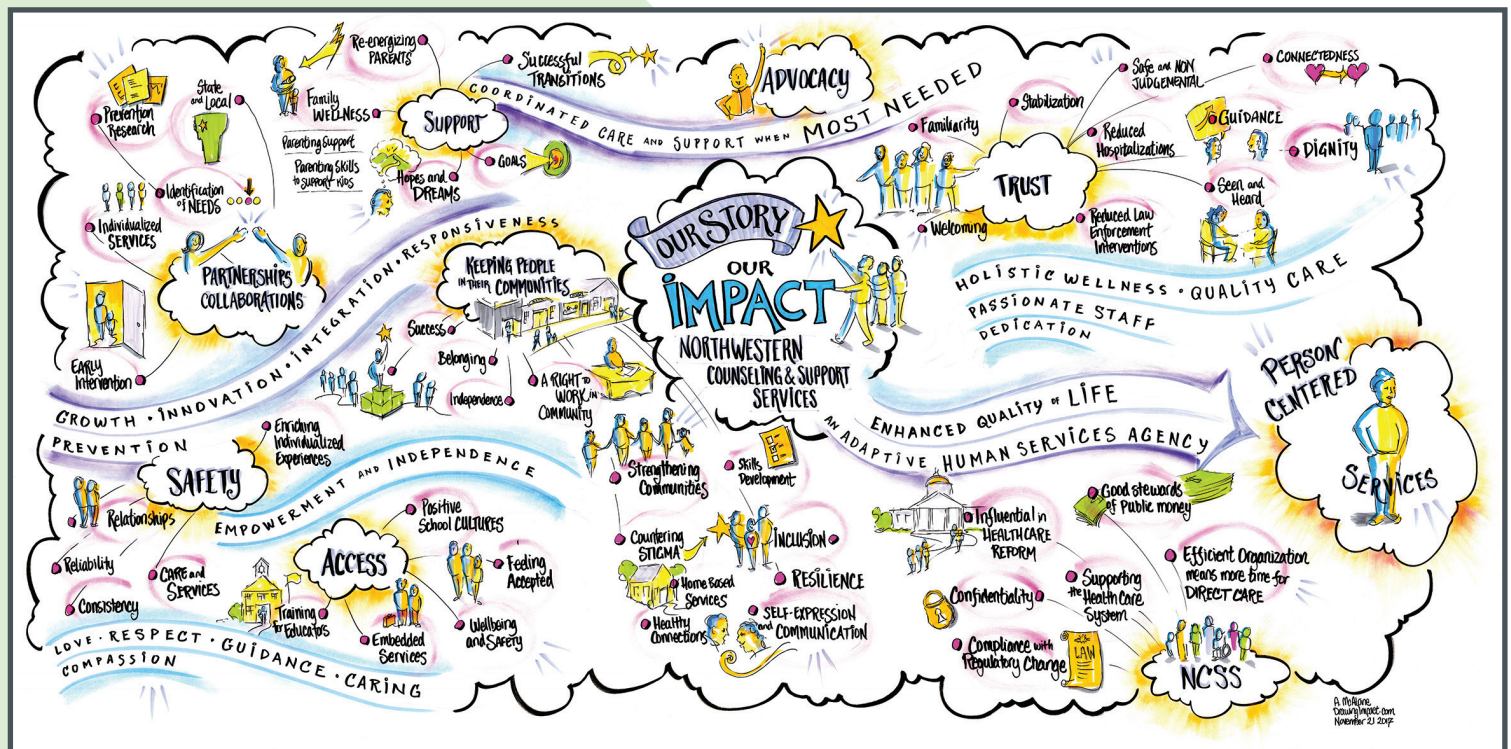
We concluded our fiscal year 2020 with a turnover rate of 19.9%. Though this is nearly 5% higher than our stated annual goal of 15%, it is well below the reported state average of 23.97% for the Designated Agency system of care!

Many factors impact staff turnover, and the pandemic certainly added an additional element forcing employees to make family-oriented choices. Other contributing factors are thought to be leadership changes within many high-level roles; major system changes; competitive pay, which is not unique to NCSS; and difficulty, during an increasingly competitive employment market, in filling certain vacancies throughout the organization.

NCSS' turnover rate was well below the DA state average of 23.97%

The Pandemic and Workforce Shortage

The workforce shortage is problematic, not only at NCSS, but in every industry and in many ways the pandemic has put an end to the traditional 9a-5p mindset, adding additional elements to the conversation. According to a survey (Prudential's Pulse of American Worker, March 2021) 68% of workers want the ability to work both onsite and remote; and 1 in 3 workers would not want to work for an employer that requires them to be onsite full time. As a health care service provider, we continue to entertain creative ways to be an employer of choice in a new world of work with the continued focus of providing quality client care!



Advocating for NCSS Services: A First Person Account

As seen on Northwest Access TV and NCSS YouTube Channel



Northwest Access TV



The month of May is Mental Health Awareness Month and this episode serves as part of NCSS' initiative to raise awareness about the importance of balancing mental health in conjunction with physical health to achieve well-being.

On this episode Justyce, Mental Health Advocate, discusses how services and treatment received from NCSS has played a major role in their recovery.

Did you know that 1 in 5 people in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties will experience a mental health challenge during their lifetime? Do you also realize the significant increase in substance abuse in our two-county area? Anxiety, depression, suicide, and self-injury are also prevalent mental health disorders. In addition, for many, the result of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought incredible disruption to everyday life. Although stigma remains a barrier for many to seek treatment those who do can achieve satisfying results that change their lives.

YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/NCSSINC



Joe Halko, host, is joined by Justyce, a Mental Health Advocate

Advocates Call on Vermont Lawmakers to Address Suicide Prevention

As seen in Vermont Digger by Ellie French

Excerpt from article:

The second bill, S.69, would appropriate funding for suicide prevention initiatives.

"While we do see a lot of creative and varied ideas in the state, there really is a need for a more unified and systematic leadership structure to help connect the dots on what is working and what appear to be promising practices," said Steven Broer, director of behavioral health services at Northwestern Counseling & Support Services.

45%
who die by
suicide have seen
their PC Provider
within 30 days
of their death

Broer said research shows 45% of those who die by suicide had seen their primary care provider within 30 days before their death. He said it's clear that physical and mental health needs to be integrated to ensure that kind of disconnect can't happen.

Link to article:

<https://vtdigger.org/2021/02/25/suicide-prevention-legislation-considered/>



Missing Piece Bakery Donation to Autism Program

The 4th Annual Puzzle Piece Cookie Sale resulted in Jessica Hubis donating \$175 towards autism programs at NCSS. The check presentation took place during October 2020.



FGI Community Partnership

The monthly FGI Community Partnership Meeting held, via Zoom, on May 5th had 30 attendees that heard a presentation on Addressing Mental Health and the importance of Self-Care during the Pandemic by NCSS staff members: Raya Noreault, Lance Metayer, and Maegan Garrett. An engaging discussion followed about how the need for self-care has become more evident since the inception of the pandemic.



Danielle Mitchell Appointed to St. Albans Police Advisory Board

Danielle Mitchell, Director of Children, Youth and Family Services was appointed to the St. Albans City Police Advisory Board. The Board is responsible for transforming the police department and building community trust through implementing principles and practices of 21st Century Policing. The board is also responsible for exploring the needs for more training and education in all City departments and boards to better understand implicit biases and the experience of non-majority communities.



SLC Students Transition Back to Sending Schools

During the 2020-2021 school year the Soar Learning Center (SLC) celebrated five positive transitions for students. Four students successfully returned to their sending public school environment following completion of treatment goals. In addition, we celebrated the early graduation of a long-time student in January 2021. Students come to the Soar Learning Center with a wide variety of needs and goals, ranging from reducing aggression, improve safety in school, increase active engagement and meet expectations of academic settings as well as build skills to understand and tolerate emotions. These five students worked through the goals and, so many more, in order to achieve these transitions.

Early graduation celebrated for a long-time student

4 students successfully returned to their sending school



A PROGRAM OF

NORTHWESTERN COUNSELING & SUPPORT SERVICES

Bernie Mittens Funds to Assist Children and Families

The Parent Child Center of NCSS, through the Vermont Parent Child Center Network (PCCN), was the recipient of over \$6,000 of the \$100,000 Senator Sanders donated to the PCCN. Using his now famous meme showcasing the importance of a good pair of Vermont mittens, Senator Sanders was able raise 2 million dollars to support important causes across the state. We're sharing our mittens and gratitude for much needed funds that will advance our services to the children and families of Franklin and Grand Isle Counties.

PCC receives over \$6,000



Afterglow Foundation Funds Address Suicide Awareness and Prevention

Since the inception of the Afterglow Foundation in 2019 funding donated to NCSS is utilized to address awareness and prevention activities working to prevent suicide deaths in our community.



- With the pandemic as a backdrop, this year NCSS has utilized donations from the Afterglow foundation to target and reduce suicide deaths in our community. This has included offering free trainings to teens within local schools and to adults in our community so that we are better equipped to recognize and respond to suicide warning signs.
- Providing professional development to our mental health clinicians in the Collaborative Assessment for Management of Suicidality, a clinical intervention developed to save the lives of people who are acutely suicidal. We are delivering this intervention in primary care practices, in our crisis bed program, and in other settings.
- We have collaborated with our local health care partners and athletic trainers to provide them with training to recognize signs of suicide and mental health concerns among student athletes.

All of this has been possible due to the generosity of the Afterglow Foundation. Together we have saved lives.

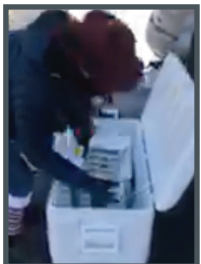
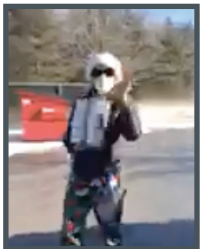
Although the Afterglow Music Festival scheduled for September 2020 had to be canceled due to the pandemic, merchandise sales and participation in the Out of Darkness walk resulted in a generous donation of \$4,410 to NCSS to address suicide awareness and prevention efforts in our community.



Afterglow donation to NCSS - Fall 2020

CRT Holiday Meal Delivery

With the disruption of the pandemic the Community Rehabilitation & Treatment (CRT) team transitioned their regular Holiday Party gathering to delivering meals to each of the clients that they serve. The team packed up SUV's loaded with meals to share holiday cheer with clients throughout the community.



The HEART Program... Helping Everyone Access Resources and Thrive

Supporting all families, from hospital to home.

A mom who discharged from HEART counseling services at 18 months postpartum:

"I feel really lucky that this service was offered to me because I don't think I could have reached out on my own. It has been so helpful."

NCSS Receives Donation from Rotary Club of St. Albans

As seen in the St. Albans Messenger: print and digital platforms

ST. ALBANS CITY — Northwestern Counseling & Support Services (NCSS) gratefully accepted a generous donation from the Rotary Club of St. Albans recently, as part of the Rotary's February fundraiser supporting COVID-19 frontline workers.

"We are so thankful for the recognition of our staff's effort in what has been an incredibly difficult year. This donation really honors their dedication to our community," said NCSS CEO Todd Bauman.

The \$1,000 donation will be used to help NCSS thank staff during a series of random drawings to celebrate their ongoing efforts exhibited throughout the pandemic in maintaining quality client care.

Since 1958, NCSS, a private, nonprofit, human services agency has been serving Franklin and Grand Isle Counties.

NCSS provides intervention and support to children, adolescents, and adults with emotional and behavioral problems; a mental health diagnosis; adolescent substance use; and an intellectual disability or developmental delay. Over 500 staff members help over 3,800 people each year in 15 locations in collaboration with community partners.

The donation comes after the Rotary Club raised money throughout the month of February by offering individuals and organizations a chance to "Buy a Heart" in honor of someone specific or for all who serve. The many sponsors and donors were displayed on red hearts in the window of the downtown Ace Hardware building — a welcome visible sign of the support for frontline workers throughout the community.

NCSS is just one of the recipients of the funds of the over \$10,000 raised. Some of the other recipients include Northwestern Medical Center, Franklin County Home Health, the St. Albans Police Department dispatchers, St. Albans Health and Rehab, Maple Run Unified School District and Missisquoi Valley School District.

Link to entire article: https://www.samesseenger.com/news/northwestern-counseling-support-services-gets-donation-from-rotary-club-of-st-albans/article_081c872a-bca8-11eb-bd82-27b320501340.html



Front row, from left, Rotarian Valdemar Garibay, who nominated Northwestern Counseling & Support Services, presents NCSS CEO Todd Bauman with a check for \$1,000. Rotarians Joe Halko, vice president, and Karyn Rocheleau, president, stand behind the check during the presentation.

Rotary Club of St. Albans Recognizes The Parent Child Center of NCSS

During September 2020, the Parent Child Center of NCSS was presented with a Lucky Ducky Certification of Appreciation on behalf of the Rotary Club of St. Albans. The Rotary Club selected five organizations in the region to highlight for their important work in the community. The PCC was selected for their work with families and young children and for their efforts in supporting the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Donation to Camp Rainbow from Knights of Columbus

Tootsie Rolls and the Knights distributing them have made a difference for children on the autism spectrum. During November 2020, the local Knights of Columbus Council 297 donated \$800 to NCSS' Camp Rainbow, a summer program for children with autism spectrum disorder and developmental disabilities.

Camp Rainbow includes all of the usual "summer camp" activities such as playing outdoors, swimming, crafts, singing and making friends.

This was the second donation the Knights have made to the camp this year. The first was for \$888.

The Knights raised the funds by passing out Tootsie Rolls and soliciting donations before and after mass at Catholic Churches in Franklin County, including Holy Angels and St. Mary's in St. Albans, St. Patrick's in Fairfield, St. Anthony's in East Fairfield and Ascension in Georgia.



Check presentation to NCSS Camp Rainbow by members of the Knights of Columbus, St. Albans Council 297, to Merry Hill, Camp Coordinator. From left to right: Valdemar Garibay, Bill Greenwood, Gordon McRae, Merry Hill, and Bill Bressette.



"I don't know how we would survive without NCSS."

- FY21 Client Satisfaction Survey comment

Generosity of Client to Ensure Mental Health Services in Future

During the pandemic, how did you spend your stimulus check funds? This is an amazing and heartwarming story about how important our services, internal collaboration, and local partnerships are in this community. Don Jerome, a resident of the Behavioral Health division made the request to donate his stimulus money to someone pursuing higher education in human services. To oblige we worked with the Northwest Career and Technical Center located at BFA St. Albans, to develop a scholarship application and process. We received two applications and Don worked with his support team to pick a candidate.

The generous donation of \$600 went to a local student, Morgan Bourdeau, who began attending St. Michael's College during the 2021 fall semester, who Don felt – “connects well with people; she wants to help those in trouble; she wants to advocate for those with a mental health illness and [he feels] she will be a good leader in the field.” This lucky BFA, Human Services program student was informed of this scholarship at the awards night on June 4, 2021.

Director of Human Resources, Stacey Remillard noted, that the “Pathways to Human Services” program from the NCSS Human Resources side of the equation has the goal of being a springboard to create greater awareness of career opportunities in the field of Human Services; to positively impact the state-wide workforce shortage by targeting the younger generation to engage in the work. The ultimate goal is to transform our student interns to qualified job candidates for NCSS in the future! To date we've hosted 11 students.

Don's generosity is paying forward the importance of having future trained mental health professionals to serve the needs of our community.



“Morgan connects well with people; she wants to help those in trouble; she wants to advocate for those with a mental health illness and [I feel] she will be a good leader in the field.”

- Don Jerome

Night of the Arts Goes Virtual

Our Community Recovery & Treatment (CRT) program modified the Night of the Arts annual event into a virtual format which was a big success. Participants went to Northwest TV Access where they were treated like celebrities while they demonstrated their musical, comic, dance and other talents. The event was held, via Zoom, on June 10th with Raya Noreault hosting. Emcees Isaac and Geoff kept a light tone for the evening with their ongoing joke telling between each performance. The amazing performances ranging from singing to comedy made for a memorable evening.



Developmental Services

HOME PROVIDERS ESSENTIAL

Especially while navigating the pandemic, we celebrate the collaboration between NCSS and home providers. Highlighting the incredible, unseen, community members who we contract with to provide safe homes for the individuals we serve. The home provider model is essential for many clients. Our home providers open their homes to our clients, and a few will offer a home for a brief stay when we have an urgent need. It's encouraging to know that there are over 120 homes in our two counties providing this essential support.

"Bless all of you good souls who reach out and help a suffering fellow man or woman. There is no higher calling than the one you all do to save another human being."

- FY21 Client Satisfaction Survey comment

Matt Habedank Elected to NMC Board of Directors

Matt Habedank, Program Manager of CYF's School Based programming, was elected to the Northwestern Medical Center's Board of Directors, effective January 2021. NCSS is very proud of him and anticipate that Matt will be a great addition to the Board. Matt will be able offer a perspective that addresses holistic health and brings children and their families to the forefront of healthcare.

Matt stated, "The decisions that are made in the next three years have the potential to reshape the system for many years to come ... helping to ensure that collaboration and partnership to foster this care is what really drives my interest."



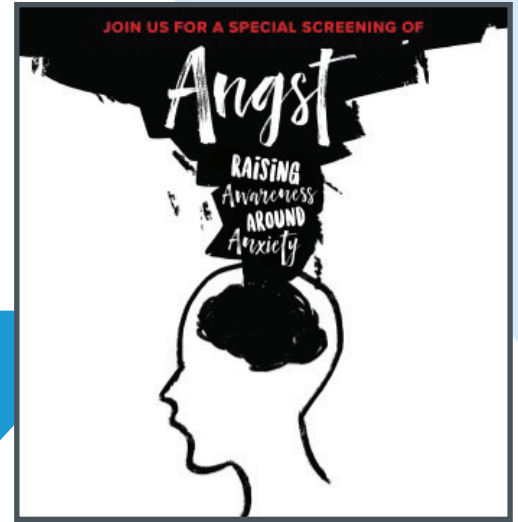
Screening of Documentary Angst

During the first week of May 2021, NCSS hosted a community wide viewing of the film Angst. The film screening was a statewide event designed to help kick off Children's Mental Health Awareness week. Angst is an original documentary designed to raise awareness around anxiety. Angst removes the stigma and opens-up the conversation around anxiety, helping people understand and manage their symptoms, and when to reach out for help. Most importantly, it shows people that they are not alone, and that anxiety is 100% treatable. This hopeful and inspiring film has helped over 2 million people around the world, weaving in the personal stories of those suffering with expert perspectives, who break down what's going on, how to deal with it, and how to help others. Michael Phelps shares his own anxiety story, proving that anxiety can affect everyone, and there is no shame in asking for help.

For many, watching Angst has been a catalyst for changing their lives for the better. The film was viewed by individuals, community partners, children and their families. Overall, about 75 licenses to view the documentary were disseminated in the Franklin and Grand Isle region.

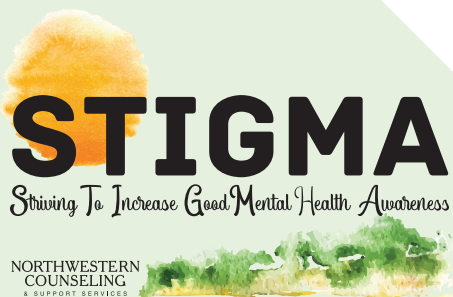
"NCSS has been a part of my life for many years. I feel I have lifted the lid of depression because of all the incredible people at NCSS."

- FY21 Client Satisfaction Survey comment



Behavioral Health Division Outreach During Pandemic

Emergency Shelter Outreach - There are 4 hotels in the area that housed approximately 90 individuals who are homeless. We supported them through our Mobile Outreach Team and direct contact as well as our Integrated Health Team which signed up individuals through the Coordinated Entry process. We also provided a Mental Health First Aid training for the Shelter staff as well as staff from Laurie's House, our region's domestic violence services provider. In addition, we provided consultation to the Shelter on ways to support their staff following critical incidents.



NCSS prefers to look at stigma as an acronym...

Striving To Increase Good Mental Health Awareness

NORTHWESTERN COUNSELING

& SUPPORT SERVICES

we're here for you



[LEARN MORE](http://www.ncssinc.org)
about our services at
www.ncssinc.org

OUR OFFICE LOCATIONS

MAIN OFFICE

107 Fisher Pond Road
St. Albans | 524-6554

TED MABLE FAMILY CENTER

130 Fisher Pond Road
St. Albans | 524-6554

SOAR LEARNING CENTER

178 McGinn Drive
St. Albans Bay | 527-7514

APPLIED BEHAVIOR CENTER

12 Houghton Street
St. Albans | 393-6643

ACADEMY OF LEARNING

27 Lower Newton Street
St. Albans | 782-8694

MAPLEVILLE DEPOT

20 Mapleville Depot
St. Albans | 524-6554

BAY VIEW CRISIS CARE CENTER

48 Lower Newton
St. Albans

LUND FAMILY CENTER

50 Joy Drive
South Burlington

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GREAT
PLACE
TO WORK,
a great place
to receive care.*



NCSS is a member of the Vermont Care Partners statewide network of sixteen non-profit, community-based agencies providing mental health, substance use and intellectual and developmental disability support.

