

**24/7 Emergency Help for Those in Crisis**  
**800-564-2578**

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## **Meeting the Needs: Mental Health Challenges in a Covid World**

Covid-19 presents significant challenges to us in the Upper Valley and Sullivan County, and they are being seen elsewhere in the world in various forms. But one critical aspect gets a rare mention: how this pandemic is affecting the mental health of those living through the crisis, and how it will continue to affect us - even after there is a vaccine or broadly effective treatment. Adaptation and preparedness are key and, with community support, West Central is making great strides.



China saw the mental health supports it mobilized quickly overwhelmed by the demand. Now we see many Americans, whether living with identified mental illness or not, struggling with the fear, loss, helplessness, and anxiety engendered by the virus. We need to be prepared for the spike in mental health problems likely to persist long after the immediate viral threat is over.

Three groups most vulnerable to mental health challenges emerging from this pandemic are: 1) those who contracted Covid-19 and needed hospitalization; 2) front-line health care

workers treating Covid-19 patients; and 3) those living with mental illness prior to the pandemic. That means West Central - and other mental healthcare providers - must do everything possible to help our current clients, while preparing for an onslaught of new people who need help.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression are on the rise - particularly in those who have been in ICUs and on ventilators. Health care workers, especially those working without proper protective gear and those whose patients have died, are at greater risk of developing PTSD and depression, anxiety and insomnia. Finally, those with pre-existing mental health conditions and substance use disorders are at increased risk of new or worsening symptoms.

But there's also good news! Most people are resilient, some even finding new strengths within. Some of us will discover emotional resources we never knew we had, and may find ourselves appreciating small things we have taken for granted. People are getting outside more, sleeping more, making more homemade meals, and adopting pets. And despite the difficulties many parents encounter as they juggle work, child care, and family relationships, they may look back and see this as a pivotal time that deepened their understanding of those closest to them.

The *other* good news is that West Central is finding ways to adapt and offer mental health services under the current circumstances. Thankfully, many generous donors and volunteers are helping. Donors like the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the Couch Family Foundation, the Hypertherm Hope Foundation, the Burkehaven Family Foundation, and many individual donors, have given West Central the ability to expand treatment options like teletherapy and video therapy, and to reach out to make sure our clients who need medication are able to get their prescriptions and injections. We are here for you, our clients, and our community.



To schedule an appointment with us,  
please call 603-542-5128.



## Mental Health Awareness Month Y

Close to 450 million people worldwide are living with mental illness, and yet almost two-thirds never receive treatment. Why? Because the stigma surrounding mental

illness is so strong that it makes people ashamed - too ashamed, even, to seek help.

But mental illness is simply an illness. Not a character flaw, and not a weakness. Like most other illnesses, there are treatments, help, and hope. Treatment makes people feel better and function better, and there's nothing wrong with wanting that!

So let's stamp out the stigma, together. Let's recognize and talk about mental health, and strive to increase our collective understanding of what mental illness is (and isn't). And if you have a friend or loved one who appears to be struggling, support them in seeking treatment. It could be the most important thing you ever do.

## A Podcast for Your Thoughts: Marijuana and the Teenage Brain



Marijuana isn't what it was 40 years ago, and the laws are markedly different, too. What are the possible adverse effects? How is pot different from CBD? Is it something to worry about? Is medical marijuana helpful? Should I worry if my teen is smoking it? Or vaping it?

Get the answers from the experts. Listen to *Marijuana and the Teenage Brain* with Diane Roston, MD, of West Central Behavioral Health and Dr. Alan Bundy, PhD, of the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth, a 34 minute podcast interview by Chris Seibel of Hanover High School and Katie McDonnell of West Central Behavioral Health - March 2, 2020.

[Click Here to Listen to the Podcast](#)



## What is Telehealth ...And What Does it Mean for You, Our Clients?

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You've probably heard the terms "telehealth" and "telemedicine" since the coronavirus pandemic started, but what do they really mean, and how can these services help you, our client, during this time?

"Telehealth" usually refers to medical information transmitted by electronic means, such as phone, email, or web-based videoconference. The term "Telemedicine" is more specific, and refers to the practice of medicine utilizing electronic means. The State of New Hampshire uses the terms interchangeably. At West Central, we use the term "Telehealth" to describe our remote services - *real-time, two-way*

*audiovisual communication.*

In the past, privacy laws have made it difficult for healthcare providers to offer telemedicine and telehealth services. The government has loosened these restrictions during the Covid-19 crisis, so now people can get the help they need without the risk of exposure to the coronavirus at a provider's office.

Currently, healthcare providers are permitted to offer services by phone or videoconference, and West Central's videoconference services continue to meet the pre-coronavirus security standards.

West Central is now offering all our services to clients by videoconference and, sometimes, phone. That means we are making sure all of our treatment teams have laptops with cameras and microphones, and that our connections are fast and secure. We are also working with our clients to ensure that they have the technology (phone, tablet or computer), and the service (internet or cell services) to meet virtually or by phone with members of their treatment team. If you don't have the proper equipment or internet service for video conferencing, we may still be able to provide services by phone. Either way, our goal is to provide clients with the best remote treatment experience possible.

If you are interested in learning more about remote therapy options available to you, and you're a current West Central client, please contact your therapist or a member of your treatment team. If you aren't a current client, but are interested in accessing mental health services remotely, call our appointment line at: 603-542-5128. And remember, if you're in crisis, our Emergency Services line is open 24/7 at:

**1-800-564-2578.**

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***Do you know them???***

**West Central's  
Masked Marvels:  
The Saga**





Continues...

There are more superheroes on the loose, so keep your eyes peeled!!! They may not be wearing capes or tights, but West Central is full of heroes, and we're continuing to introduce them on Facebook.



But first, another round of applause for those who have made the masks protecting our superheroes *and* some of our clients! A HUGE thank you to the Upper Valley Mask Makers Facebook Group who have, thus far, made and donated over 23,000 masks to the community (see the beautiful ones featured above!) including to West Central. You are all amazing, colorful, and truly reflect what our community is all about!



And this Masked Marvel? An elf, you say? Close - but it's actually Dave Celone, West Central's very own Director of Development and Community Relations. Dave is exploring the mood-enhancing power of mixed prints as he toils to get the message of mental health out while bringing in the donations that make so many of our services possible!

Who is this Masked Marvel? It's West

Central's Director of Adult Programs in Sullivan County! But we just call her "Amazing." Her organizational skills keep things humming, but she's never too busy to share a kind word and a laugh. And I'm thinking she may have a fondness for blueberries...



Do you recognize this Masked Marvel? It's not the Easter Bunny, but one of the wonderful office managers that keeps West Central hopping! If you see this mental health bunny, make sure you toss a few extra jellybeans her way!



Don't let the chain link fool you - this mysterious Masked Marvel is all about making connections and having fun! This West Central children's therapist went to visit her young client to bring birthday wishes, make silly hats and beards from bubbles, and practice elbow bumps for when they can have in-person therapy again!



If you work for West Central and have been wearing one of the many beautiful masks donated by a mask-maker in the community, send along



your photo!  
([hduncan@wcbh.org](mailto:hduncan@wcbh.org)) Tell us why you like your mask. And thank you for wearing masks in public to help slow the spread of coronavirus.

What about this Dynamic Duo? While you won't see them providing therapy, this pair has contributed years of volunteer service and leadership to West Central, and we're pretty sure they can leap tall buildings, too!

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## Covid-19 Mental Health Crisis Relief Fund

We started this Fund in early May to help offset the many unforeseen expenses we continue to incur as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. From personal protective equipment to telehealth/technology, to providing clients with phones, to patient financial aid, to 24/7 Emergency Services, our needs have grown. The response has been overwhelming, and we've raised our goal from an initial \$10,000 to \$75,000. No gift is too small to make a difference. To all who have donated, we extend our deepest thanks. *If you wish to contribute, please click on the button below.* Our front-line doctors, nurses, therapists, case managers, and emergency services providers all thank you!

[Yes, I'd Like To Donate:Covid-19 Mental Health Crisis Relief](#)





## The Matthew S. T. Winer Award For Humanism & Excellence in Community Psychiatry

Fifteen years ago, on May 21, 2005, West Central lost a valued colleague to cancer at the much-too-young age of 47. Matthew Winer was a psychiatrist who completed his residency in psychiatry at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. He served as a staff psychiatrist in West Central's Lebanon clinic until his untimely death. The Matthew Winer Award is a cash award given each year in Matt's memory to the West Central psychiatry resident who best exemplifies Matt's qualities of compassion and devotion to his patients. This year, in honor of her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, we're grateful to Matt's mother, Mimi Winer, who requests friends contribute to West Central and her son's named Award. If you wish to donate, please write "Matthew Winer Award" in the memo line of your check, or, if you choose to make an online gift, please send us an email to [dtichner@wcbh.com](mailto:dtichner@wcbh.com) to alert us your gift is in Matt's memory. To learn more about the extraordinary person Matt was, please **Click Here** to read his obituary. To send a check, our mailing address is: West Central Behavioral Health, 9 Hanover Street, Suite 2, Lebanon, NH 03766.

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**Want to make an appointment? Call (603) 542-5128**

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## In The News — A Letter of Thanks

On May 4, 2020, the *Valley News* published a Letter to the Editor jointly penned by West Central's Board Chair (Pete Bleyler), CEO and President (Roger W. Osman, PhD), Medical Director (Diane Roston, MD), and Board Committee Chair (Doug Williamson, MD). During this challenging period, it was

important to recognize some of the many local businesses stepping up and supporting us during the COVID-19 pandemic. We know these businesses are not just helping us, but also many other worthy organizations and people working hard to keep us healthy and safe. To read the letter, please **[Click Here](#)**. And remember - when things look up, and you're out in the community purchasing products and services, these are the businesses that are watching out for us. Let's help them thrive!

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## What's the Buzz? (Our Clients Weigh In)

We're always trying to improve...What do we do well? What can we do better? A short time ago, we asked our clients to complete a survey. Here's what they said:

" I'm very satisfied."

"Working with WCBH team has helped me with my depression - outstanding services all around."

"Everyone is remarkable I truly appreciate their help - even their pharmacy!"

"Everything is awesome."

"There should be more options to connect with your therapist in case you can't come in. You could do a phone session."

"I wish my credit card information was saved in the system, so that the check-in process was faster. Otherwise I am very happy with the services and care!"

"This place is A+"

*We hear you, and we're working on improving every day! While we won't be offering more groups during the pandemic, we are offering telehealth by phone and video. We plan to continue these services for as long as regulations allow. We are also upgrading our technology to offer these services long-term. And we're streamlining many of our manual processes - including registration - thanks to the technology we're installing.*

*THANK YOU for the wonderful feedback. We're thrilled to have so many satisfied clients.*

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## Sharing This Newsletter Might Save a Life!

This newsletter goes out to all West Central staff, our Board

members, and many friends and supporters with our heartfelt thanks. Please share it broadly with your friends and family so people remember our name and the work we do as this region's community mental health and substance use center.

(for past newsletters [click here](#))

**When people in need know who we are,  
they'll contact us *when they need help*.**



*Nurturing Dreams...Transforming Lives...*

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West Central Behavioral Health serves clients in the Upper Valley and Sullivan County, and has offices in Lebanon, Claremont, and Newport, NH.  
WCBH is a tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organization.