Start the Conversation

Stop the Stigma

2019 REPORT TO NORTHEAST CONNECTICUT
A Message from Our President

When Life Happens…

At United Services we know that the Road of Life is seldom a smooth or straight path. Along the way we are faced both with age-old life challenges and transitions such as starting new jobs, new schools and new junctures in life, planned or unplanned. Tragedy and unexpected misfortunes can befall any of us, at any time, including divorce, domestic violence, mental illness and addiction to medications or other substances that are often a factor in the many untimely deaths that plague our region.

“When life happens” it’s often difficult to know where to turn for help, but thanks to your support, United Services can be there for our community members during their times of greatest need.”

Sadly, public support of community behavioral health has traditionally only been invoked during times of tragedy and violence, only to fade as a priority in public policy once the immediate events are over.

But things are beginning to change! As a society we are awakening to the reality that mind and body are inseparably linked. There is a growing awareness that each of us, regardless of race, riches or religion, finds ourselves on a continuum of mental health that ranges from illness to wellness at any given minute, month, day or year, especially during those times when “life happens.”

Slowly, but surely, a new world is emerging – one where people are talking more openly about issues that need to be discussed, and one where we are winning the war against the stigma that still prevents far too many individuals from coming forward for the help and support that United Services can provide.

We are reversing false beliefs and misperceptions that sometimes arise from the worst place of all – from ourselves from the guilt that can prevent far too many from taking that brave first step on their Road to Recovery. We know that that stigma also impacts state funding priorities that always seem to leave communities like ours with the highest needs in the state with the least amount of resources.

Ironically, at the very time we cut the ribbon on our new Windham Regional Health and Wellness Center in July, which has continued to be overlooked for matching state funding, the Governor was signing “Mental Health Parity” legislation that requires the state to end discriminatory practices and ensure equity for insurance coverage of mental illness. Yet rather than a symbol of the lack of Mental Health funding parity within Connecticut, we consider our new Windham Regional Clinic a monument to the “we can do it” attitude of residents of what we have come to call Connecticut’s “Forgotten Corner” when it comes to the allocation of equitable resources.

In our efforts to ensure that no one needs to suffer in silence, be they a victim of domestic violence, or those struggling with mental health or addiction recovery, we hope you will consider supporting United Services’ Annual Appeal, as well as our combined Capital Campaigns to help offset the costs of construction.

Most of all, we need EVERYONE to reach out to their statewide and local elected officials in support of equitable behavioral health funding for Northeast Connecticut! There is SO much more work that needs to be done in educating public policy makers and the public alike when it comes to debunking the many myths and stigmas related to mental health and other issues.

We hope you can do your part to “start the conversation” and we thank you so much for your support in “Creating Healthy Communities”.

Diane L. Manning
President/CEO
There is no need to Suffer in Silence

Life in the 21st Century is not easy. No doubt, decades ago people struggled with all of life’s challenges just as people do today. Modern technology simultaneously simplifies our lives, yet it also adds new complexities never foreseen.

In the past, the stigma of issues such as mental illness, substance addiction, and domestic violence were relegated to things to be kept “private” – reinforcing the toxicity and loneliness that comes from suffering in silence.

Add to that the additional stigmas related to discrimination based on race, religion, country of origin, or the misunderstandings related to sexual orientation or gender identity, and it is no wonder that we face what the U.S. Surgeon General described “stigma” as a true American public health crisis relegating those most in need of support to needlessly suffer.

Yet today, thanks to United Services our community no longer needs to suffer in silence as more and more people are taking charge of their emotional and mental wellness.

Whether it is domestic violence, drug addiction or struggles with depression or other mental illness, all of the above and more, people are waking up to the fact that NONE of us are immune from such issues in life.

Awareness is growing of the inseparable connection between mind and body, body and mind. Yet even as this new awareness spreads, stigmas associated with behavioral health still exists, exacerbating the struggles for far too many. Today, whether our neighbors are struggling with the stigma associated with mental wellness, abusive relationships, or vices and habits that can control us if we do not control them, there is help, and there is hope.

Sadly, stigma is not limited just to the misunderstanding of others. The damage we inflict upon ourselves is perhaps the cruelest of all, as individuals deny themselves available help, worrying “what will people think?”

Yes, much is out of our control – but a great many things ARE in our control, starting with “how we think” – and when one takes charge of one’s own mental wellness, amazing things can happen and lives can be transformed.

Our society – our very culture – is crying out that we make ourselves – mind and body – the priority we all deserve.
Moving from Stigma to Support… from Illness to Wellness

Imagine if a close friend, upon discovering they had skin cancer, decided “they could handle it on their own.”

When it comes to a physical illness, almost all of us would seek to nonjudgmentally counsel and guide that friend to reach out for proven and professional life-saving assistance. Yet we all know someone – perhaps even ourselves – who may be reluctant to ask for help when it comes to their own mental health and our efforts to be the best “self” we can be.

Admitting that one needs help can be among the most courageous acts one can ever undertake. When “life happens” periods of depression and anxiety are normal and to be expected, but if our state of mind becomes debilitating, they can become disorders, requiring professional help and support, lest we allow them to fully control our lives.

Just as one requires professional physical therapy after enduring an injury, the professionals at United Services are just as experienced providing cognitive and behavioral therapy to help those who have been injured by the psychological traumas that any of us can experience.

As we break through the stigma more and more will come to realize that when we shift our focus away from “illness” toward a need to be mindful of our mental wellness, a shift in society’s stigmas can begin to take place. Using proven, evidence based best practices, the professionals at United Services can help us change how we think about how we think!

IN CRISIS
• Very anxious
• Very low mood
• Absenteeism
• Exhausted
• Sickness, physical pains
• Isolation
• Very poor sleep
• Weight loss
• Psychotic break
• Severe drug/alcohol abuse

STRUGGLING
• Anxious
• Depressed
• Low self-esteem
• Tired
• Poor work performance
• Presenteeism
• Poor concentration
• Poor sleep
• Poor appetite
• Drug/alcohol abuse

UNSETTLED
• Worried, nervous
• Edgy
• Irritable
• Frustrated
• Self-doubting
• Sad, gloomy
• Trouble sleeping
• Tired
• Distracted
• Decreased social activity

THRIVING
• Normal mood, some variations
• Positive
• Calm
• Functioning normally in job
• Sleeping well
• Focused
• Eating normally
• Normal social activity

EXCELling
• Cheerful, joyful
• Solution focused
• Energetic
• High job performance
• Prioritizing sleep and recovery
• “Flow” - intense engagement
• Fully realizing potential
• Actively seeking connections
Mental Wellness in the Workplace

“When Life Happens” it doesn’t just impact us at home – it can impact our workplace performance and even jeopardize one’s employment, along with the stability and mental wellness that comes with a well performed job in a healthy workplace.

United Services’ Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides the employees of local companies with prompt and confidential access for services and support for personal issues such as addiction, mental health, or other personal issues. The program also provides coverage for family members, recognizing that if a partner or child encounters difficult times, it also impacts YOU in the workplace.

With many of us spending 40 hours or more at work each week, our colleagues can become like family. And as is the case with many families, personal conflicts can arise which can impact the workplace environment for ALL. At such times EAPs empower employees to seek support and can even help mediate disputes! Client company supervisors can also utilize the Human Resource expertise of United Services to make mandatory referrals requiring that employees engage in counseling and address workplace performance concerns.

Many are finding that their United Services’ EAP plan is an easy first step on their Road to Recovery, recognizing that their livelihood and that of their family is dependent on their mental wellness and ability to perform their job. They can take that first step in seeking treatment knowing that their employer respects their confidentiality and wants to help make both their home and workplace a healthy, welcoming environment recognizing that “life happens” to everyone.

Such corporate partnerships with United Services empower employees to seek treatment and support, allowing individuals and families to embark on their personal road to recovery. Ultimately United Services’ EAP program is dedicated to keeping our community workplaces healthy and robust, while helping to manage and retain employees, helping our partner companies deliver the highest quality standards of products and services.

“United Services Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has helped many employees of St. Joseph Living Center on a personal and professional level. We have referred numerous employees for personal counseling & employee mediation with United Services for issues in the home or workplace, and I know our employees are grateful that their employer cares enough about them to help them get the assistance they need.

I highly recommend the services provided by United Services Employee Assistance Program. Given the challenges our employees experience outside of work, providing them with personal development and counseling has helped create a positive work environment and improved the quality of life for our residents.”

-Ginny Person, LNHA, St. Joseph’s Living Center, Windham, CT

EAPs Can Help Improve Performance and Absences

- 73% Report improved work performance
- 64% Report reduced work absence

What is an EAP?

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a voluntary, work-based program that offers free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services to employees when personal or work-related problems arise.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports: “all published studies indicate that Employee Assistance Plans are cost-effective” while the U.S. Department of Labor reports that for every dollar invested in an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), employers generally save anywhere from $5 to $16, savings that are typically achieved from reduced sick time utilization and improved productivity!

1 – U.S. Department of Labor
Inherent in the crime of domestic violence is the secrecy and stigma that comes with it. At United Services we understand why men and women who have endured domestic violence are often reluctant to report.

Those subjected to verbal and physical abuse have endured the suffering of being shamed by their abuser and made to somehow feel responsible for their own victimization. Nearly all victims of this crime are suffering in silence from the literal and figurative scars of domestic violence and emotional abuse.

Sadly, the stigma doesn’t only stem from the abuser. Stigmas related to domestic abuse are often perpetuated by those on the outside looking in, who openly wonder why victims of domestic violence would ever contemplate remaining with an abusing partner. Others judgmentally question those who make the difficult decision to leave a relationship and rebuild their lives.

Victims can also impose stigma on themselves, sensitive to the judgment they fear from others. Those with children fear being labeled a “bad parent” for staying – or not staying - with a violent partner – ashamed that they have – or have not, stayed in an abusive relationship for far too long. They endure life as a “secret” victim of domestic violence, struggling to make the “least worst” decision in what can feel like an impossible situation.

At United Services we recognize the courage of those who make brave and difficult choices every day. We encourage those who have endured abuse to reach out to us to help them remain safe, and when the time is right, empower them and their families to reclaim the healthy and happy lives they deserve to live.

United Services Domestic Violence Program – Shelter from the Storm

Domestic Violence Hotline 888-774-2900
"Give yourself permission to seek help by taking care of yourself. Exercise, start watching what you eat, and get extra sleep, but most importantly find out what works best for you! Start small, take your time, and be nice to yourself."

Start the Conversation and end the Stigma of Addiction Treatment

_Courage ~ Respect ~ Bravery_

Imagine if these were the words that first come to mind when discussing those who have boldly stepped forward to take control of their addictions. Instead, our culture suffers from the decades of stigma fueled by dismissive and disdainful words that reflect a bygone era when our understanding of addiction was limited, when many thought that addiction was some sort of moral failing and should be a source of shame.

Perhaps no other stigma is more difficult to address. Only 1 in 10 Americans with a substance use disorder receive treatment. Yet science has long proven that substance use disorder is a chronic brain disease that can be managed with medical and behavioral health treatment.

At United Services we recognize those that take that first step as some of the strongest and most courageous people we will ever meet and we look forward to the day when all recognize the long-hidden reality that people actually do recover from drug and alcohol addiction; that it’s a chronic disease that can be successfully managed for life; and that it affects individuals who are every bit as moral, productive, intelligent, talented—and humanly flawed—as the next person.

Telling someone we need help is the most vulnerable and courageous thing we can do. When we take that first step on the path to recovery and find we are met with empathy and compassion as a response, we find hope. Recovery ultimately is remembering who you are and using your strengths to become the person you were meant to be. By seeking help through self-care and therapy, it’s our privilege and honor to help you begin to find yourself again.

A new world is emerging — one where opinions and beliefs about addiction are changing. This change is mostly because of the dissemination of accurate, factual information about addiction as well as the changing demographics of addiction.

United Services is helping our community fight and win the war against Opioid Dependency. Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) is available through United Services’ Outpatient Program. MAT provides medication assisted treatment interventions for individuals who are dependent on opioid drugs and have a desire to break free of the bondage of addiction. **Call 860-774-2020 to learn about treatment options.**
United Services’ Behavioral Health Home Staff was named the top performing BHH wellness team in the state, with an audit score of 94%!

Among the featured presenters at the 2019 New England Rural Health Association conference were United Services “In Shape” wellness facilitator Dean Leanna and David Olsen, who shared his personal story of wellness and recovery!

The “Forgotten Corner” – “Quiet” no longer

This past February, United Services and other local health and human service agencies rallied for an end to mental health funding disparities impacting northeast Connecticut during “Forgotten Corner Day” at the State Capitol. United Services’ and others have advocated for the passage of legislation to create a “Forgotten Corner Task Force” to require the state to assess and address state funding disparities and ensure access to local community-based services.

United Services receives state funding of approximately $3,100 per client per year for adult mental health services, while other providers in other areas of the state can receive over $20,000 per client per year for the same services. Residents of Windham County, which typically experiences the highest per capita needs among Connecticut residents, have continued to rank “Mental Health” as the #1 health concern in the region. The legislation was introduced and passed by the Connecticut House of Representatives, but the Senate failed to pass the bill in the final hours of the General Assembly session. United Services will again seek the passage of this bill and encourages local residents to contact their elected officials in support of regional funding equity.

United Services’ Wellness Programs making waves across the State and Region

This past year United Services’ Behavioral Health Home (BHH) team also received statewide recognition for receiving a score of 94% on their program audit, the highest score awarded in the state. BHH is an innovative health care model that integrates behavioral health care with physical health care and focuses on care coordination, disease self-management and adoption of a healthy lifestyle. The program’s success is a testament to the intra-agency cooperation across every department, as our teams work to coordinate outpatient services, psychiatric services, case management and more through the BHH program.

United Services’ “In-Shape” wellness facilitator Dean Leanna and David Olsen were also selected to present at the New England Rural Health Association annual conference held on November 7th at Sunday River, Maine. Their presentation “Paradigm Shifts: Moving from Illness to Wellness in Rural Behavioral Health” showcased United Services’ innovative expansion of the “In-Shape” program which has helped empower dozens of United Services clients to take charge of their physical and mental wellness.
There is help – there is hope

Throughout our community, state and nation, an awakening is taking place. More and more people are sharing their stories and speaking their truth, and have found that they are met with empathy and compassion.

There is a saying in the recovery community: “what grows in the dark will die in the light.” The solution lies in starting the conversation that mental wellness is as important as physical health.

We know it takes courage to ask for help, and that is why we are asking for your support to help ensure that your family, friends and neighbors have the access to care to break the cycle of illness, addiction and abuse that have already cost too many lives.

Your support and financial support is making a difference, but we continue to need YOUR support to urge the Governor and other elected officials to make northeast Connecticut a priority for equitable funding.

We hope you will do your part to start the conversation and end the stigma, as we work together in our mission of “Creating Healthy Communities.”

Windham Regional Health and Wellness Center

July 8, 2019 marked the culmination of nearly a decade of efforts at United Services held a ribbon cutting ceremony our new Windham Regional Health and Wellness Center!

Honored guests included Congressman Joe Courtney, and representatives of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, all of whom were instrumental in helping secure federal loans to construct a modern facility needed to respond to a community need that has seen outpatient adult mental health volume increase 250% over the past decade, with an even greater demand for services.

United Services was also joined by corporate benefactors, including Jewett City Savings Bank President Kevin Merchant who received recognition for the “Jewett City Savings Bank Community Room,” named in recognition of their long-term support for United Services’ Mission and Vision through their corporate contributions.

Those interested in memorializing loved ones or who simply wish to show their support to community behavioral health care are encouraged to make THEIR voices heard by supporting United Services’ capital and annual campaigns by calling Director of Development John Goodman at 860-774-2020 or emailing jgoodman@usmhs.org

For more information on naming opportunities, contact Director of Development John J. Goodman at 860-774-2020.
United Services Annual Report 2018-2019 – *Services Delivered*

**Prevention and Early Intervention Services**
- Center for Autism Clinical ........................................ 68 adults and children
- Permanency Placement Services Program ..................... 12 children
- Reunification and Therapeutic Family Time .................... 49 families
- Parenting Support Services Program ............................ 187 families
- Family Violence Education Program ............................ 128 adults
- Parent Education Program ........................................ 98 adults
- Employee Assistance Program
  - Employees Covered ............................................... 2,445 Employees covered
- Juvenile Review Board/Referrals ................................ 29 Youth
- School to Employment Program ................................... 16 Students
- Youth Service Bureau .............................................. 852 Youth and Families
- LIST Trainings ....................................................... 518 Youth and Families

**Clinical Services**
- Addiction Recovery Outpatient Services ...................... 133 adults
- Adult Behavioral Health Outpatient Services ................ 1,400 adults
- Medication Assisted Treatment (began in Jan.) ............... 12 adults
- Child and Family Behavioral Health Treatment ............... 591 children
- Emergency Psychiatric Services ................................ 143 adults and children
- Psychiatric Services .............................................. 1,527 adults and children
- Jail Diversion ...................................................... 70 adults

**Continuing Care Services**
- Community Support Services .................................. 388 adults
- CSS Homeless/shelter outreach .................................. 29 adults
- Behavioral Health Home .......................................... 349 adults and 5 children
- Senior Programs ................................................... 38 adults
- InSHAPE .............................................................. 76 adults
- Residential Support Services .................................... 47 adults
- Social Rehabilitation Services .................................... 162 adults
- Work Services ...................................................... 117 adults

**Intensive Services**
- Domestic Violence Program/Total
  - Number Served .................................................... 1,147 adults and children
  - DVP Shelter Services ............................................ 2,328 nights
  - DVP Hotline ......................................................... 1,154 calls
- Total DVP contacts and services ................................. 15,403
- Milner House ......................................................... 28 adults
- Young Adult Services ............................................. 32 young adults

Total units of service delivered ................................. 103,256

*Mission Statement – Our vision and mission is to create healthy communities by providing an effective response to the youth, family and adult social and behavioral health needs in the communities we serve.*
We Can Create Healthy Communities Together.

Please help us lend a hand to a neighbor in need…

Enclosed in this report is a donor-reply Annual Appeal envelope. So many of our clients – your neighbors – are taking the initiative to reach out for help. Will you help us to answer their call with a tax-deductible gift?

$25 could buy shoes for a child who had to leave a violent home in his slippers one night

$50 could provide household safety equipment for the family of a preschooler whose parents have been laid off from their jobs

$100 could pay for therapeutic activities that help a traumatized child to talk about difficult and personal issues

$500 could help to cover the costs of needed repairs to our domestic violence shelters

$1,000 could provide scholarships to families unable to afford out-of-pocket expenses for desperately needed services to treat a loved one with an Autism Spectrum Disorder

Domestic Violence Hotline 888-774-2900

Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Program Revenues and Expenditures

Total Revenues – $17,328,647

Contributions – 1%

Towns 75,031
Other 131,658

State Grants – 70%

DMHAS 8,858,203
DCF 1,891,443
DSS 738,936
Other 584,726

Federal Grants – 4%

$705,311

Fees – 20%

$3,529,247

Contracts 319,556
Rent 199,144
Other 295,391

Other – 5%

$814,091

Total Expenditures – $17,133,949

Continuing Care Services – 29%

$4,862,590

Clinical Services – 35%

$5,828,388

Intensive Services – 28%

$4,609,797

Prevention Services – 8%

$1,315,025

United Services Leadership

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About United Services, Inc.

United Services is one of CT’s most comprehensive private, non-profit behavioral health centers, providing mental and behavioral health education, prevention, treatment and social services for the adults, children, families and businesses of northeastern Connecticut since 1964.

Offices:

1007 North Main St., Dayville, CT 06241
303 Putnam Rd., Wauregan, CT 06387
140 North Frontage Road, Mansfield Center, CT 06250

860-774-2020 | UnitedServicesCT.org
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Comprehensive Behavioral Health Services

Outpatient Behavioral Health Psychiatric Services
Outpatient Addiction Recovery Services
Child Guidance/Family Counseling
Domestic Violence Program
Employee Assistance Program
Family Parent Support Programs
Medication Assisted (Opioid) Treatment
Youth Service Bureau

Now accepting new patients at our new location at 140 North Frontage Road, Mansfield Center, CT