

Bright Horizons

YOUR generosity makes a difference!

**"You don't have to do it alone."
pg.2**


BHcare
Hope • Health • Recovery

Winter 2021

Reaching Out for Help

"My mom died suddenly in 2017 and it fell to me to depart my home in Vermont to care for my dad in New York. After a long decline, my dad passed away and the family home was sold, after which I moved to Connecticut.

For years I had experienced some degree of chronic depression and recurrent stress in my life. But the recent deaths of my parents, coupled with the strains of the pandemic, the alarming political developments in our country, and having to give up a job twice in three years pushed my anxiety over the top. I thought that it would do me good to get some counseling. During the time that I needed assistance, I was on HUSKY state insurance and found BHcare in their referral directory.

In March of 2020, I reached out to BHcare and started regular Telehealth visits. The ability to receive quality therapy sessions in the comfort of my own home was already a stress reliever. I wanted to be assigned a clinician that was experienced in Cognitive Behavioral

Therapy. Ultimately, I was matched with Aaron, who beyond dialectical and cognitive behavioral therapy training, specialized in narrative therapy.

Narrative therapy was a new experience for me. The regular, disciplined work with Aaron really opened my mind. It helped me examine and retrain my patterns of thinking. He assigned to me what we jokingly called "homework" - tasks that I fully embraced. I found Aaron's special focus on mindfulness exercises to be truly helpful. Matching me with Aaron was such a wise move. My outlook, moods, management tools and attitude all improved over time, and I was feeling less anxious as fall approached.

I also worked with an assigned psychiatric nurse named Kathleen to manage my medication. I was seeing a physician's assistant at my primary care office who first started to help me with my meds. She admitted early that this specific area was beyond her expertise and she recommended that I connect with someone at BHcare. Presently, at my request, Kathleen is helping me taper the antidepressant medications in a safe and effective way.



I sought other therapies outside of those offered by BHcare as I continued to work with Aaron and Kathleen. I don't feel depressed at this time, and I can better manage difficult thoughts, behaviors, experiences and emotions. With his encouragement, I have cut back on my sessions with Aaron to once a month, and I feel positive about my future.

This is a difficult time for so many. Those in need must remember; you don't have to do it alone. If you need assistance, do not delay another day. I'm so glad that I sought the support, expertise and assistance of the fine professionals at BHcare."

~ David

You made it possible for clients to safely receive life-changing services during an extraordinarily difficult time in our lives.

Finding the Right Resources



"We sent Jon to the Parent Child Resource Center (PCRC) Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) at 8-years-old. His behavioral issues started in preschool, where he struggled with aggression. As he got older, we noticed he also struggled academically. We tried for years to advocate for special education, but we were repeatedly denied.

Finally, Jon was transferred to a therapeutic school but continued to struggle both behaviorally and academically. He fell behind in school and started to become physical with the kids in his class.

With the help of intensive therapy, we began to see Jon use his words instead of hurting others when he became frustrated. The PCRC staff helped him learn how to develop peer relationships and Jon became less aggressive toward both his classmates and our family.

He became a leader in his group room and helped other kids who struggled. Jon now thrives in school. He is a proud graduate of the IOP program and continues to receive one-on-one therapy. We are proud of how much he has grown and grateful for the support our family received at PCRC." ~ Jon's parents

Your donation helps children build the skills necessary to successfully function in everyday life and provides support to strengthen and stabilize families.

Keeping Prevention a Priority

This past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us. It had disrupted so many aspects of everyone's lives. Amid the pandemic, drug use is on the rise, alcohol use has increased, as well as anxiety, stress, isolation, grief, depression and suicide.

- The CDC is estimating 75,500 drug related deaths in 2020. According to the CT Department of Public Health, from January 2020 – November 2020 there were 1,132 confirmed drug overdose deaths and 292 cases still pending. There was a 13 percent increase in drug overdose deaths by October 2020, compared to the same time period in 2019.
- Nationwide, alcohol use is on the rise, especially among women. A study published in JAMA Open Network found women in the study reported drinking 17 percent more often than they did in 2019 and reported 41 percent more heavy drinking days.
- In CT suicide is the eleventh leading cause of death overall, the second leading cause of death for ages 10-34, fourth leading cause for ages 35-54, and the seventh leading cause for ages 55-64.

In prevention, we continuously monitor existing trends and known risk factors that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Alliance for Prevention & Wellness (APW) has been working hand in hand with our communities to provide trainings, education, and resources to ensure known risk factors are being addressed. We have expanded the number of virtual programs offered and continue to work with our community partners to distribute prevention tools and information to keep our communities safe and healthy.

Recently, APW staff completed their certifications to provide Mental Health First Aid Trainings virtually and will begin providing those to our community partners and residents in February.

To learn more or register for an up-coming training visit us at apw-ct.org or [Facebook.com/apwct](https://www.facebook.com/apwct).



With your support, our prevention efforts continue to expand and adapt to meet our communities when, where and how they are needed most.

Learning to Trust Again

"I am a single dad of four kids. My victim advocate told me to call the HOPE Family Justice Center (HFJC) because I needed help with the Christmas holiday. I was really stressed about not having a Christmas for my kids. They told me they didn't want to ask Santa for presents and not to bother him.

The HFJC site manager, Paola, listened to me and told me about the services available, but I was not ready. After growing up as a foster kid and dealing with abuse and racism, I don't ask for help and don't easily trust people. An hour later, Paola called back to let me know she found a family that wanted to help us with Christmas. It was so quick I couldn't wrap my head around it

after feeling lost and hopeless.

Paola talked to me about my strengths - something no one has ever asked me about. I started to open up about how I grew up and how I am now in another relationship that is violent and painful. I have felt very alone in this. She told me I was doing the best I could in a hard situation. She told me I was a hero for my kids.

I felt more comfortable and decided to ask for help for my own sadness, for food and employment assistance, and for a laptop for my child to do schoolwork. The HFJC talked to the school, DCF and so many others to make sure they understood what our family was going through.



This year, a family helped us with a tree, decorations, food and gifts. When I saw there was a present for me - a pair of boots - I was overwhelmed with so many emotions. I felt like a human again."
~ Michael

Your gifts helped brighten the holidays for hundreds of adults, children and families throughout our communities.

How We're Helping

We are unable to recall the exact year, that one member of our friend group, "The Mamas" sadly pointed out that our kids would soon be moving on to new stages and adventures in their lives after theater ended. But she knew our bond was different, we all did, having forged a friendship that we sensed ran far deeper than the average acquaintance variety often experienced through our children's activities. We professed one night that we would work hard to make sure our friendship continued to flourish, despite the eventual absence of the kids' activity that bound us years earlier.



Our entre to Center Stage Theatre in Shelton began as early as 2005. The performance classes soon became recitals, then full production plays and variety shows, cabarets and community support events. A community theater survives on the philosophy, 'It takes a village' and soon, "The Mamas" were hard at work. As the kids' friendship blossomed, so did ours. And as the years passed, the connections began to take wing outside of Center Stage. We supported each other through difficult times; child-rearing challenges, family illness, deaths and job losses.

Eventually, our kids did head off to college, leaving "The Mamas" behind. Our lives had changed but as our very wise friend surmised, this rare and beautiful friendship continued.

Recently, as we were planning our COVID-necessitated virtual holiday gathering, we decided to change things up a bit. Instead of gifting each other, we would use the money we would typically spend and combine it toward a donation to those less fortunate than ourselves. A member of our friend group worked at a quality toy manufacturer and would be able to purchase a large supply for distribution to families in need. Through the manager at My Sister's Place in Ansonia, we made our way to BHcare and the Parent Child Resource Center. We were thrilled to know that several local children received the toys in time for Christmas. "The Mamas" celebrated the holiday, virtually speaking, with a toast to teamwork and our friendship!



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BHcare is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation Rehabilitation Facilities and The Joint Commission; and is licensed by the Department of Public Health.

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We apologize for any omissions or oversights. If your department, foundation or municipality has been overlooked, please bring it to our attention.



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